

V MAG

MAR99

MEN SEEKING WOMEN

PROSTITUTION

WOMEN SERVICING MEN

PLUS:
BOOKS
COMICS
HEALTH
& THE BEST
LOCAL MUSIC
COVERAGE IN
THE VALLEY

FREE

CONTEST!
see page 45



ROBERT
TOBEY

OP EDGE



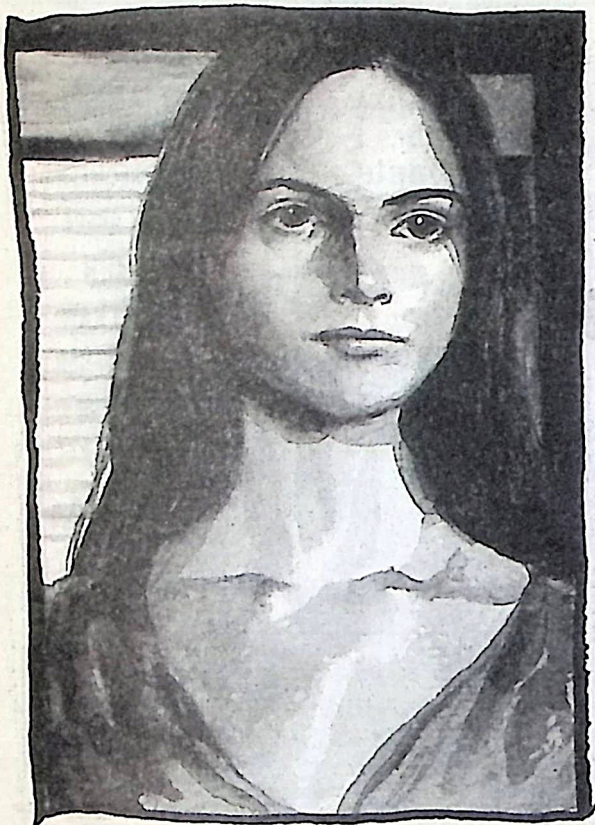
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Every 'Valentine's Day' I rent a prostitute. It has sort of become a tradition. This year however I think I might just take in a movie instead. I'm a little low on cash

Plus, I've been finding myself in a state of melancholy nostalgia for the 'whores of yesteryear'. For some reason I can't help wondering what happened to some of them...

Like Valerie for instance. I remember her telling me she wanted to be a musician or singer or something.

And Jenny

I think, wanted to go back to college - NO wait, she was saving for college. That's right. I wonder if she was able...

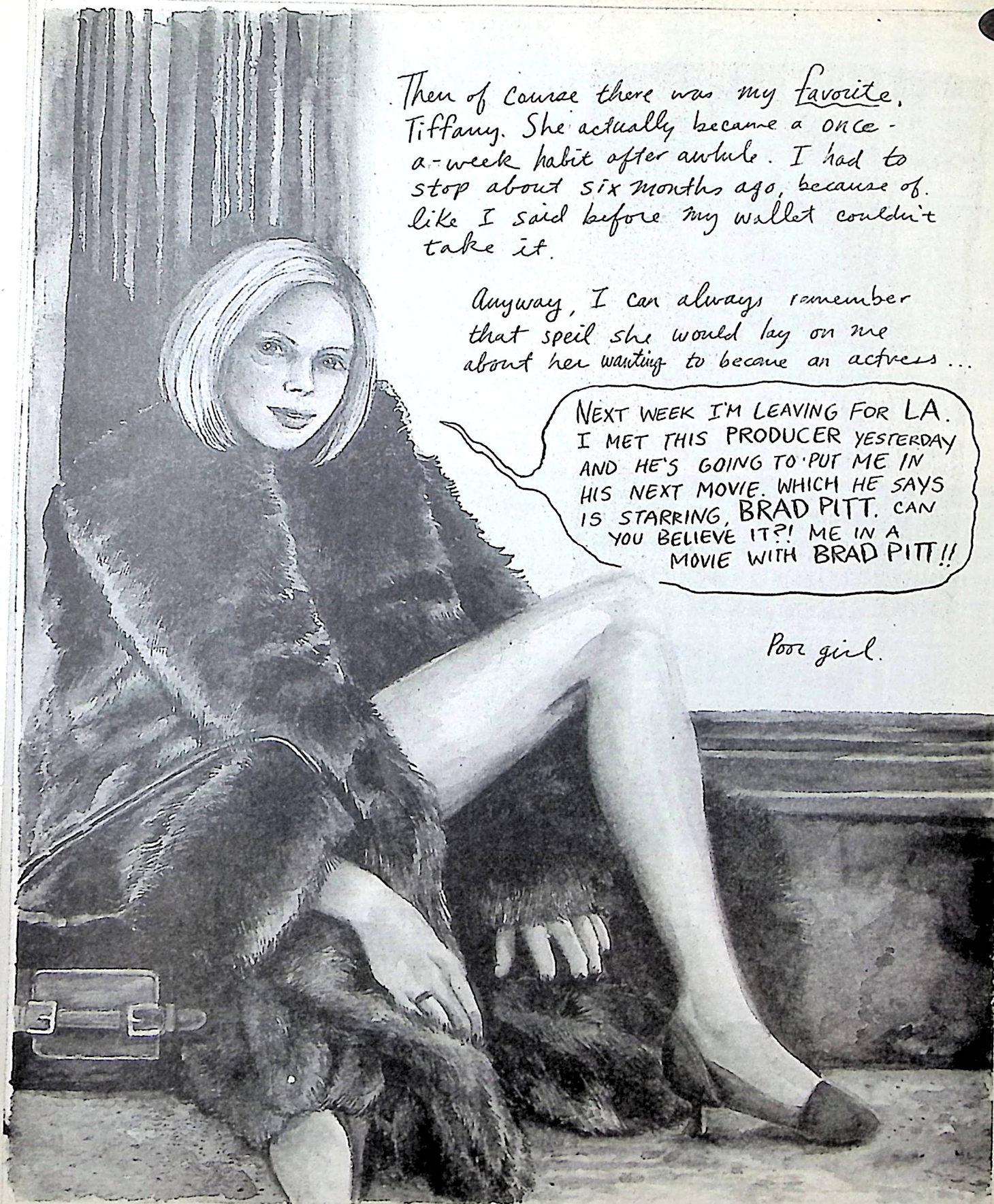


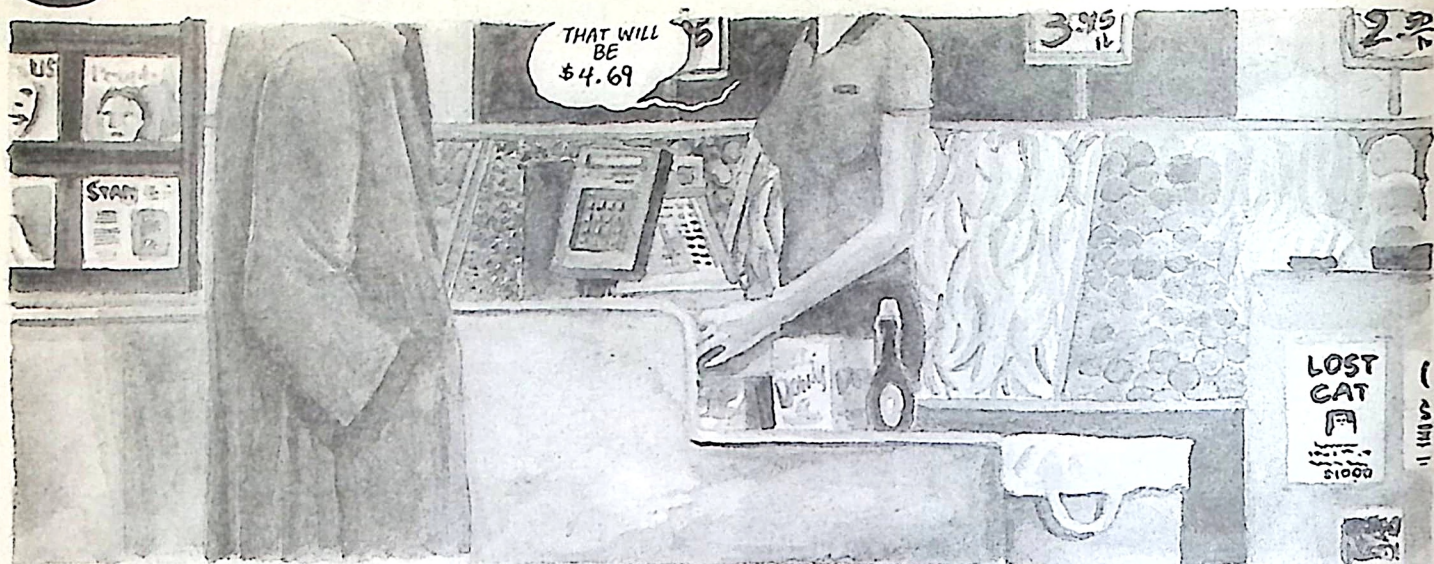
Then of course there was my favorite,
Tiffany. She actually became a once-
a-week habit after awhile. I had to
stop about six months ago, because of.
like I said before my wallet couldn't
take it.

Anyway, I can always remember
that spell she would lay on me
about her wanting to become an actress...

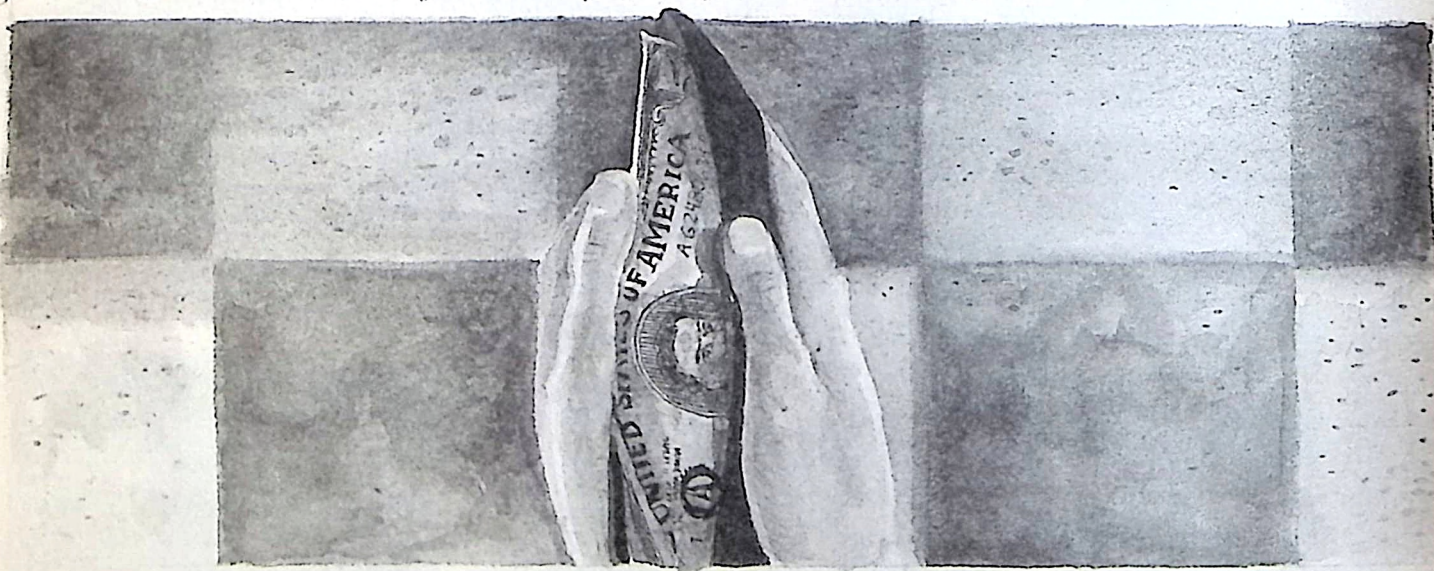
NEXT WEEK I'M LEAVING FOR LA.
I MET THIS PRODUCER YESTERDAY
AND HE'S GOING TO PUT ME IN
HIS NEXT MOVIE. WHICH HE SAYS
IS STARRING, BRAD PITT. CAN
YOU BELIEVE IT?! ME IN A
MOVIE WITH BRAD PITT!!

Poor girl.





Ahhh...it's all foolish anyway. I mean, I only saw them once, they did what they were paid for and that was that.



Why should I give it any more thought?...



interview with a john

5

conducted by c. katz

"John" and I met in a restaurant in Springfield. We spent several hours dining and discussing his trysts with prostitutes over the years. John was, of course, very concerned about his anonymity, which I have honored. I will say though that John is a typical White, middle-class man, in his late 30's. He has frequented prostitutes on occasion throughout his life. He has recently decided to stop this practice. The reasons for this decision were revealed during the course of our interview.

Katz: Via what venue did you meet/pickup a prostitute? Off the street, in a bar, at a rest area, through an escort service, via a Valley Advocate sex ad, at an illegal brothel?

John: Through a number of those sources.

K: Where do you have the sex? In the car, in a hotel room, at her place, in an alley?

J: Usually in a hotel room, or one time in a room in a legal brothel in Europe. Never out on the street. I'd like to point out that I have usually frequented higher-end prostitutes. I think that this is important for your readers to know. My experiences and the prostitutes I've been with are fairly specific. These experiences, I'm sure would be different than the experiences I might have had with street hookers. Most of my experiences have been positive, but I don't want to contribute to the "Happy Hooker" myth by not pointing out that the prostitutes I have been with are from the higher-end.

K: Do you ever get to "know" the prostitute?

J: Yes, to a certain extent. I've always been curious and interested about who they are. It isn't always possible because some don't want to talk. Most do appreciate it, though.

K: Where have you solicited prostitutes?

J: Various areas. Not just around here.

K: So, are you married?

J: No, but I've been in a long-term rela-

tionship for almost 10 years.

K: Do you practice safe sex with the prostitutes?

J: Yes.

K: Do you practice safe sex with your girlfriend?

J: Yes. I always do.

K: Although the rates of female-to-male transmission of STD's and AIDS is rather low compared to male-to-female transmission, and even though you practice safe sex, don't you ever wonder/worry about catching an STD?

J: I no longer go to prostitutes, so I no longer do anything that puts me at risk. Part of the reason I stopped was that, even though I was playing it safe, I still didn't want to take the chance.

K: Since you are in a relationship, and assuming you are having sex with your girlfriend, why frequent a prostitute?

J: I'd rather not go into this too deeply. I'd prefer to not talk about my girlfriend. But, I will say that it's not just about sex. There are many reasons why, some very personal. Contact with another human being is part of it. Desire to be touched. It's a human transaction even though there's money involved. Strange as it may seem, part of what I was looking for was connection. Also, there was no potential for her to be disappointed. No expectations.

K: What is your view of prostitution? As "just a business"? As a career choice for the prostitute? As something done out of desperation?

J: I am struck by the variety of women I've found involved in it... including a number of women working towards a profession, working part-time as a prostitute as a way to make money without working full-time. This would probably be different for low-end, full-time prostitutes. I've never been with anybody on drugs, for example.

K: How has frequenting prostitutes changed the way you view women, and your relationships with women?

J: I respect and love women. I don't hate women at all. It's not about sex or degradation or hurting anybody; none of that turns me on. My view of women was impacted much more negatively by pornography than prostitution. When I was younger, after looking at pornography, I found myself noticing women's bodies on the street much more. This hasn't been true of prostitution.

K: I have a female friend who found it hard to believe that Hugh Grant paid for sex from someone whom she described as "a scary, ugly" prostitute. Does beauty or physical attractiveness enter into the equation when searching for a prostitute? Or does it not matter?

J: I never had sex with someone who scares me. Of course attractiveness matters. She doesn't have to be exquisitely beautiful — it is in the same way one is attracted to women in the regular world. Even the most attractive woman may not be someone I'd want to be with.

There's also something about variety — having many different partners. Men may understand this more than women, perhaps. Also, attractiveness is more mental. One woman I was with was extremely beautiful but it wasn't a particularly amazing experience.

K: Do you like the danger of discovery, of doing something illegal, of doing something secret?

J: I didn't like the illegal part or the danger. I did like that it was something frowned upon socially. It's light years away from who I was expected to be. It goes against my Catholic upbringing. In a sense it made me feel free.

K: So, aside from the health risk mentioned earlier, why did you stop seeking out prostitutes?

J: Ultimately, it was a frustrating experience because I was looking for connection with a human being. The limits are built into the situation. You can't have an authentic equal relationship. And, it is a financial transaction. It is that and something else, too. But, it's never really a real relationship.

It was an experience. I'm done with it. It ran its course.

For a perspective on the life of your average street-walker, I spoke with Jen Doe, a sex worker advocate who up until recently worked in an HIV-prevention program with Springfield's Arise For Social Justice, a group that tries to provide a voice for the voiceless in the gritty capital of Western Massachusetts.

Jen isn't your typical social worker. Having put herself through college as a stripper, she's very much in favor of a woman's right to use her body for profit, particularly if it involves humiliating men. She's not out to reform anybody. I spoke with her about how her experiences transformed her more idealistic and laissez-faire approach into an even more passionate concern for these women whom polite society would just as soon forget about.

P: Did you become acquainted with prostitutes through dancing?

J: A lot of women came into the bars I worked at, and worked the crowds, or waited outside... very intelligent of a woman to do that... that's probably one of the safest environments you can be working in...

P: They would come in off the street—

J: As customers, per se, and work the other customers in the crowd. Go around, see who's ready to leave.

P: Did you get to know any of these women?

J: I usually watched from a distance then. I was too busy trying to make my own money, and they were busy trying to make theirs.

P: And they're not exactly folks

interview with a SEX WORKER ADVOCATE

conducted by
punco godyn



interested in making friends when they are working.

J: No. No. You'll find that very rarely in any form of the sex industry. You'll make acquaintances, but never friends.

P: Under what context did you really start to know any women...

J: Doing HIV prevention, actually... we do street outreach three nights a week, looking for prostitutes.

P: Explain to me the logistics of that.

J: OK. This is a unique program that focuses on the causation of risk-related behaviors in prostitution. Looking at the economics mostly. And why women don't use condoms at certain times, and why they do, and why they use a condom with a John but not with one of their boyfriends. Or their girlfriends, for that matter. Looking at how that's addressed, and how we can get women to use condoms, or bleach kits, or go out to the needle exchange up here in Northampton. Instead of preaching at them, we started talking with them about welfare reform. It allows them to know me, allows them to know that we're OK, that we ain't going to try and save their souls. We're just here to make sure they get

what's coming to them.

P: Welfare reform? Was that just a ruse?

J: No. Hell no. If you can't get a... If you aren't economically stable, which is pretty much any woman in the low-income bracket, you're going to do whatever it takes, however it takes to survive. So whether it's in sex work, if it means you're going to get \$30 for a blow job instead of \$20 if you don't use a condom, you're not going to use it. If it means you're not going to get the shit beat out of you when you get home by the boyfriend, you're not gonna use a condom. You need to make your money. You need to have a safe place to live when you get home. So when I go out talking about welfare reform, I'm talking about women not having to risk their lives to make that extra money so that they can feed their kids. Or feed a drug addiction.

P: Geographically speaking, where did you work?

J: I was concentrated in Springfield, that's where I was supposed to be working. But there's similar programs for this in Holyoke now.

P: I know people are going to say it's a Springfield thing, or a Holyoke thing.

J: No, there's call girls running around here. I saw a girl here in Northampton doing street work three weeks ago. She was right on the corner... I was just SO impressed. That takes such balls. I was so happy when I saw that, like, "Yes, you go!" There's a market

yet to be tapped here... I wanted to run out of my car and say "You want a condom? You need anything?"

P: Why are you happy about it? I mean the standard liberal thing is to say, "Well, we're very concerned about these women..."

J: Yadda yadda...

P: "But ideally we want to get them out of this exploitative lifestyle."

J: I don't view it as exploitative. I don't view any form of sex work as exploitative. No more than working at McDonalds or waiting on tables is exploitative. All forms of labor can basically be looked at as exploitation, at least in this one, you are utilizing what you own. This is your own business, this is your own body. You are in control of your economic standing, to a certain degree. You have the right to fight certain forms of sexism and discrimination, you don't have to take money from someone who's being blatantly stupid towards you.

P: Don't most of these girls work for a guy?

J: No.

P: Really.

J: Yeah. Pimps are relatively rare. Pimps take away your money. If you're working for a guy, it's usually your boyfriend. And that's an abusive relationship. Now I'm not pro-pimp. I want to see all the pimps locked up [laughs].

P: You're saying that's not a phenomenon around here as much?

J: I have to say maybe 30

percent of the women work with a pimp. The majority of them are independent. It makes the work difficult, because it's more of a hassle when you go through a pimp...

P: You would admit that's exploitation.

J: Yeah, I admit it's exploitation. I admit it's batterment. Just like the manager at McDonald's.

P: But you don't really feel it's built into the "industry"...

J: No. Hell no. The majority of the women are working for drug money, also. If you want to call the drug dealer a pimp also, I'd put that figure up to 70. The drug dealer is a particularly key figure, especially in Springfield.

I don't think the field of sex work is exploitive, it's the context it's done in.

P: Are many of these women addicts?

J: Mm-Hm [nods].

P: If they weren't addicts, would they be in sex work?

J: Nope.

P: I'm trying to understand your logic here... I'm not wildly disagreeing with you here, but it seems that if they're addicts, and otherwise they wouldn't be doing this...

J: Which is problematic. How many addicts work at McDonald's? At least in this kind of field, you can maintain and control your hours around your highs, and not run the risk of getting sick as often as working a 9 to 5 job. But the exploitation that drugs creates, the drug industry creates an exploitation that is very difficult to put your finger on, because I'm not

sure where the blame lies. Yeah sure they made the first step, but then, why are they doing drugs?

You know if you live in an area where that's the main industry, that's the only industry, the drug industry, you know, it's probably the leading employer in Springfield at this rate. [laughs] Maybe I wouldn't go so far as to say that. But, especially in some areas, where you can't get a job to save your fucking life, drugs are an industry. They're worse than the auto industry.

P: Another question:

Homelessness. Do these women have homes?

J: Some of them do. Some of them don't. The shelters will throw you out if they catch you doing prostitution. They won't allow you into them, which is ridiculous. A woman's got to survive.

I knew this one woman who was doing sex work. She lost her job dancing and she started doing street work and the women's shelter found out she was doing street work and threw her out. Where's she gonna go? What's she gonna do, go sleep at a John's house? Oh, that's safe. We've created circumstances that are a complete Catch-22.

P: Did you come into this with this state of mind, or did this develop from working...?

J: I actually became I guess you could say more conservative. I came in

saying all sex work is good sex work, all drugs are good drugs, almost borderline Libertarian, very anarchistic.

I took a look at the situation, and I saw, yeah, women are being exploited by the labor force, and to not acknowledge that is a general over-arching... there are women who don't want to be in this work, that wouldn't be in this work if they didn't need the next fix. That

wouldn't be in this work if they didn't need those diapers.

P: When you say sex workers, in the past, have you lumped dancing in with that? Can it be like a gateway drug?

J: It can and can't be. Marijuana can lead to heroin as much as dancing can lead to street work. A lot of people do marijuana and never try heroin.

P: And some people just go straight to heroin.

J: Bingo. Exactly, and some people find dancing to be a really hard job, because you have to make things a little more male-dominated — the fact that clubs are owned by men, the clientele, you have to please the clientele a little bit more...

P: You have to keep up your looks more?

J: Well, you don't and you do... you can work at some of the lower-end clubs like the 418, you know.

P: I was thinking more, if you were doing street work, it's less incumbent for you to keep your appearance up.

J: You're better off dressing down when you're doing street work, so you don't attract as much attention from police. It's so rare to see the stiletto-heel, mini-skirt type... I think those girls are undercover cops. I haven't met a woman dressed like that yet. I think they might be undercover cops, and they just don't get it.

P: Well, that's a good warning to potential Johns, too.

J: But I don't want it to be a warning to Johns if those women are really trying! I don't want to take their money away from them.

P: But many hookers tend to dress down.

J: Mm-hm. Yes. Less attention from police.

P: Can we talk about cops for a second? What kind of stories did you get from prostitutes about...

J: Heard of state troopers forcing a woman to give him a blow job... Springfield cops pretty much do the same... the police in Springfield are brutal.

There are a lot of good cops, don't get me wrong. But seriously, there are a couple of bad apples in the bunch that really, really are... that's where the exploitation truly comes from, is when have to do this to basically keep your ass from going into jail, and getting your kids taken away by DSS [the state Department of Social Services]. It's ridiculous: you either arrest them and fine them, or just let it pass.

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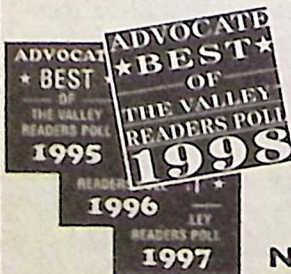
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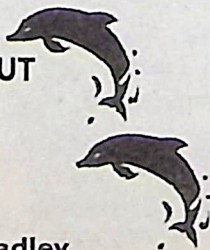
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and say, well, they're working...
P: How is it enforced? Is it enforced well?
J: Usually they're written up a ticket for lewd behavior. I find that the most amusing part.
P: Is it because it's just so much of a bother, because it's so prevalent?
J: You, know, the only context I've heard them talk about police is in an abusive situation. But maybe that's because people know that I work for ARISE, and we did a lot of police brutality issues. Maybe it was easier to talk to us about that.
P: What position is a woman, a prostitute, in if she's been abused by a cop?

J: There's nothing you can do. She can't go file a report. Because she's doing an illegal act. And then you got... Who are you going to believe, a whore or the shining man in blue, you know? Especially if the woman is a woman of color. Ridiculous.

P: We're bombarded with stereotypes, movie portrayals. Hollywood just loves the Hooker with a Heart of Gold.

J: A "hooker with a heart of gold" will stab you in the back the minute you turn around, if it means she'll get your wallet. A "hooker with a heart of gold" goes and buys pam-pers for her baby with the wallet she just stole from you. Whatever: it's the reality of the situation. These women ain't perfect. Some of them do have hearts of gold, some of them are just downright bitches. It's a cycle.

P: What's a typical day for a typical hooker?
J: Typical day... it depends, it really does. It's not as centralised, like in New York City, where you can say, Okay, well there are the Fifth Avenue girls, and you can go down the street to the Harlem girls... No. It might be I wake up at four in the afternoon, go down and get my fix for the day, try and hustle the guys going home, get another fix, get up, work until five in the morning, go home, go to bed, wake up, get a fix. It might be get up at 6 a.m., feed the

kid, go back to sleep — it depends on who you are. There is no typical hooker. It took me nine months to figure out who was doing sex work, and who was just hanging out. Because a lot of sex work is done out of cars... you don't get the stil-letos and all that. You get one girl that's more attractive, another girl will be like wearing jeans and a T-shirt. One girl might be Latina, one girl might be African-American, and then you might see five white girls. There's one who might be a drag queen.

P: So is there sort of a grey area, where they might not necessarily be doing regular street work, but may...
J: I'd say that's most of them. I don't think there's many that work "professional," that go out every night, every night, every night. I think there's girls that go out and make their money and then don't do it for a couple of weeks.

P: Now do they have any other means of income?
J: Not really.
P: If they're not hooking regularly, how are they...
J: Welfare check. SSI. It all depends on who you are, why you're there. You might be dealing, and funds are running low... you might make macrame squares and sell them at fairs. God only knows. There is no standard hooker. Hookers are a diverse group of women these days, you know?

P: How would someone who turns to prostitution as a living, do it, if they lived in one of these hill towns around here?
J: You go to the bar and start picking up guys. I talked to a woman who did this kind of work in the Berkshires... she told me, yeah, they go to the bars, they pick up a couple of guys, and make maybe \$100 that night. Man, those girls are doing good.

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PROSTITUTION

AND THE HAPPY VALLEY

BY G. MICHAEL DOBBS

PRETTY WOMAN?

You've seen the fantasies. Whether it's Miss Kitty dallying with Marshall Dillon on *Gunsmoke*, or Kathleen Turner moonlighting as China Blue in *Crimes of Passion*, movies, fiction, and television teach us that when the chips are down, prostitutes all have a heart of gold. They can lead glamorous lives, and they have supreme power over the men

who gladly pay for their sexual services.

And maybe some rich handsome guy will fall in love with them just like Richard Gere and Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*.

Now here's the reality. A young woman is hanging out near High and School Streets in downtown Springfield. She may be dressed just provocatively enough to get your attention as you drive through the neighborhood. She doesn't look like Shirley MacLaine, Jane Fonda, Amanda Blake, Kathleen Turner, Stella Stevens, or any of the dozen of other actresses who played hookers in the movies or television. She may look frightened, bored, cold, or high. To make money to feed herself and possibly her children, she is willing to risk arrest, disease, robbery, exploitation, and violence. Her job is to find men

who are willing to pay for sex; negotiate an act, a price and a place

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY MARK BODE

do what is agreed upon; collect the money; wash up; and get back on the street to do it again. And again.

Glamorous, isn't it?

America is probably the most schizophrenic country on the planet when it comes to sex. The American people are bombarded with sexual references from all pop cultural sources. Conspiracy theorists please note: there is nothing subliminal about it.

Make no mistake, it's not "love in the afternoon" on the soap operas; it's sex. Erection and premature ejaculation humor abounds on sitcoms. Sex plays a gigantic role in advertising. Do you want to have sex, then buy this perfume, aftershave, style of clothing, breath mint... you name it.

Yet despite all of these sexual messages, America is an amazingly uptight nation. We bemoan our children's exposure to sexual messages and yet we all watch the 8:00 p.m. sitcom that has sexual content. We wag our finger and *tsk tsk* if an actress drops her top in *Playboy*, but if Cindy Crawford does a nude layout in *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair* then suddenly it's art. Few communities raise an uproar when the Mom and Pop video rental store has an X-rated room, but heaven help us all if someone proposes to put a strip bar in a distant part of town.

That is exactly what happened this year in Chicopee. The city fought tooth and nail to prevent a new Gold Club to be located in an abandoned office building on a lonely road between Chicopee and Ludlow. The city spent thousands of dollars trying to fight the new nudie bar and brought their arguments as far up the judicial chain as they could. What particularly cheesed the politicians in Chicopee is that this club borders the turnpike, and they were afraid the good image of their city would be altered. After all, this is the town known for the World's Largest Kielbasa. Ultimately, the legal effort failed, and the work on the building is now underway. Interestingly enough, the town fathers, though, have turned a blind eye to the video store near city hall that has an extensive X-rated room. Paying to watch naked consenting adults have sex is okay, but paying to look at naked consenting adults not having sex is wrong.

Prostitution falls right into the center of this moral and legal quagmire. The old rule of "you can't legislate morality," doesn't apply to prostitution. While the Supreme Court rulings on community standards have established some benchmarks for the sale of pornography, actually buying sex still remains illegal across the country with the exceptions of the legal brothels in some counties in Nevada.

Prostitution has its advocates who have been fighting for decriminalization and recognition that "sex workers" should have the same kind of rights as any self-employed person. At the same time, there are many feminists who view prostitution as slavery and the ultimate objectification of a woman.

A 1987 study reported by author Priscilla Alexander concluded that it is difficult to estimate the

number of persons who currently work, or have ever worked as prostitutes. Arrest figures at the year of the study ranged over 100,000. The National Task Force on Prostitution suggests that over one million people in this country have worked as prostitutes in the United States, or about 1% of American women.

Prostitution is a crime, but not a crime that gets noticed. According to 1995 crime statistics, Springfield has a ranking of 14th in violent crime out of the 233 municipalities in Massachusetts. Murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults all make the survey. If you want information on drug arrests, these are measured as well. Prostitution fails to make the crime hit parade, and yet it is viewed as a serious on-going social problem.

HARD COPY

Perhaps while American society condemns it, many people harbor a secret fascination with prostitution. Hookers always seem to make great news copy.

"Hooker Chic" hit almost 30 years ago when New York City madam Xaviera Hollander wrote a best-selling book, *The Happy Hooker*. The book and Hollander subsequently became the subject of three films (*The Happy Hooker*, *The Happy Hooker Goes to Hollywood*, and *The Happy Hooker Goes to Washington*) and Hollander began a sex advice column in *Penthouse* which is still running.

About ten years after Hollander's successes, the media went crazy over a very proper, attractive, blonde society woman who was busted for running a prostitution ring in Manhattan: Sydney Biddle Barrows was dubbed the "Mayflower Madam" by the press as she was actually a descendent of our Pilgrim forefathers. Despite the social faux pas of actually being arrested for selling sex, Barrows wrote a book, and was the subject of a made-for-television film starring Candice Bergen.

If there's any doubt that sex sells one just has to consult Barrows' 1985 deposition to the President's Commission on Organized Crime. Initially, her business, Cachet, charged \$125 to \$135 an hour depending upon the prostitute (she had a rating system for the women who were in the greatest demand). By the time of her arrest, Barrows was charging her clients \$450 for two hours.

Barrows is still in demand as an expert on the sex industry. CNN offers a service to local television news shows for interviews via satellite between hometown anchors and newsmakers, and on its list of newsmakers who have recently participated in this service is Barrows, right after the Secretary of State and ahead of Elmo.

The latest madam to make news was, of course, Heidi Fleiss. The daughter of a doctor, Fleiss ran what has been described as a "sophisticated call-girl ring" in Los Angeles which ran afoul of the law in 1995. What propelled Fleiss' story into the press was not so much

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what she had done, but the people her prostitutes had done. Several film-land celebrities were involved, and most prominent was actor Charlie Sheen. Sheen received limited immunity to testify against Fleiss and was quite embarrassed to admit he had paid Fleiss over \$53,000 for the services of her hookers. Perhaps most humiliating was Sheen revealing he had paid one of Fleiss employees \$2,000 to be with him on Christmas Day. Fleiss served 21 months in prison and was released in November, only to return to jail recently as she preferred incarceration to a halfway house.

Fleiss has been the subject of a documentary and has a fan club. She tried to capitalize on the safe sex movement by promoting a line of men's underwear that had a pocket just large enough for a condom. Whether or not she achieves the long-lasting notoriety of Barrows and Hollander is yet to be seen.

The most interesting thing about these three women is that all were madams. They ran their own operations, and weren't necessarily in the bedroom turning tricks. None of them were standing on cold street corners or performing oral sex in cars.

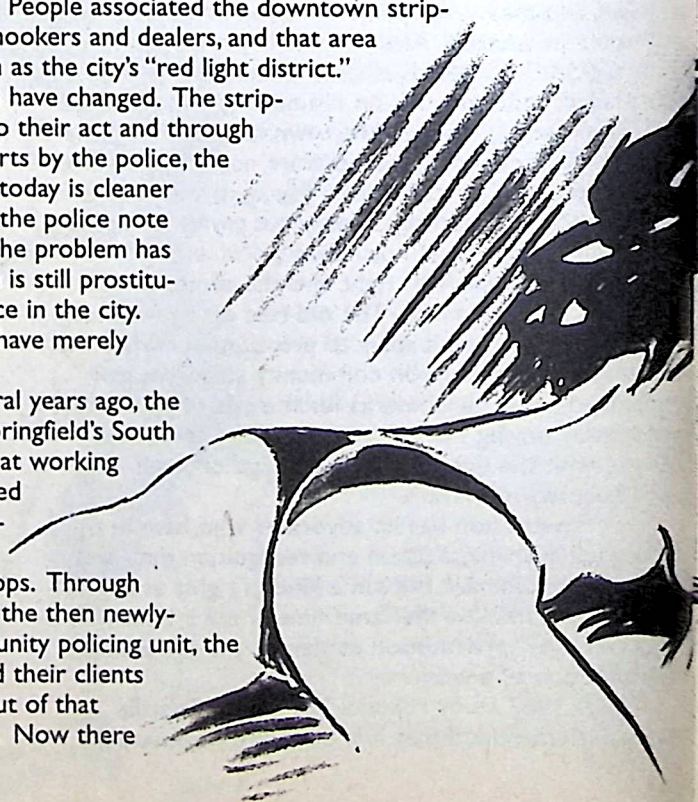
OUT CRUISING

It's ten o'clock at night and as I drive down Dwight Street I spot something I just don't see much any more in the center of downtown Springfield: a hooker. Standing near the door of the Club 418, she is an emaciated young woman dressed in stereotypical clothing. She looks like she just came out of central casting for a role on some cop show. The night is cold and she looks like she is shivering. As my light turns green, she ducks into the doorway of the bar.

Prostitution as a business venture requires access to a fairly large population group, and Springfield, as the largest city in the Valley, has traditionally had the clearest identification with prostitution. Years ago, both male and female prostitutes roamed Frank D. Murray, Dwight, Lyman and Taylor Streets. People associated the downtown strip-bars with the hookers and dealers, and that area became known as the city's "red light district."

Times have changed. The strip-bars cleaned up their act and through concerted efforts by the police, the neighborhood today is cleaner and safer. But the police note that although the problem has lessened, there is still prostitution taking place in the city. The locations have merely changed.

Several years ago, the residents of Springfield's South End noticed that working girls had invaded their neighborhood of homes and shops. Through work done by the then newly-formed community policing unit, the prostitutes and their clients were driven out of that neighborhood. Now there



are prostitutes up the hill in the next neighborhood of Maple High Six Corners, and the police must start over.

One police official told me that his officers have arrested the same woman three times in one night. The women have no identification, use aliases, are processed, and released. Some never turn up for court. One recent published report stated the Springfield Police Department makes "hundreds" of prostitution arrests each year.

Of national concern is the connection between prostitutes and drugs, and the spread of HIV. In a 1993 report, William Darrow, a Center for Disease Control AIDS epidemiology official, maintained there were no proven cases of HIV transmission from prostitutes to clients, but did say a small percentage of prostitutes may be HIV-positive. A 1988 U.S. Department of Health study consistently reported that only three to five percent of the sexually transmitted disease in this country were related to prostitution and concluded that it was easier to catch an STD from unprotected sex with a date than from a prostitute.

Research varies on drug abuse issues, but there is clearly evidence to show that many prostitutes either become addicted while working or use prostitution as the way to support their habit. Studies in the United States found prevalence of substance use and addiction ranging from zero to 84%, depending on the population being studied, with substance addiction approximately 50% among street prostitutes but rare among women who work off the street.

The costs can be steep for enforcing prostitution laws. According to a paper published in the April 1987 issue of *Hastings Law Journal*, the national average arrest, court and incarceration costs amount to nearly \$2,000.00 per prostitution arrest. Cities spent an average of 7.5 million dollars on prostitution control every year, ranging from one million dollars (Memphis) to 23 million dollars (New York).

While debate continues whether or not prostitution is a victimless crime, it's clear that robbery and more violent crime can be part of a prostitution transaction. Several years ago, an elderly man picked up a prostitute in downtown Springfield, and transported her to a motel in Chicopee.

There, the woman beat the man to death with a toilet seat and robbed him. Chicopee police investigating the crime were surprised when the woman returned to the room. She had left her purse at the scene.



KEEPING THE VALLEY HAPPY

If you are looking for some horizontal cha-cha action, look no further than your corner store and *The Valley Advocate*. The venerable "alternative" newspaper likes to present itself as the beacon of truth in the area, especially compared to those nasty old Establishment daily newspapers. *The Advocate* though has no problem accepting cash for ads which may just support some of society's worst habits. They've

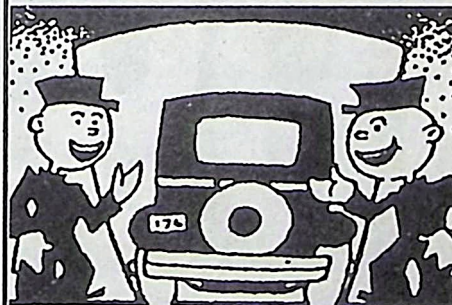


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made a bunch of money off of sexually explicit personal ads and also have had an "adult services" section that's been pretty lively as well.

Now perhaps the *Advocate* is making a political statement about sexual freedom and perhaps they consider street-walking as *passé*. That's why they have the section called "escort agencies."

Now the line these escort services give is that they provide companionship for a fee. Don't have a date for that cocktail party at the boss' house? Then give them a call and a suitable date for a price will be at your doorstep.

Does anyone believe this? Just how pathetic is this concept?

Of course, more than just the time of an attractive young woman can be had, at least according to the case against the Seventh Heaven Escort Service. Last fall, an employee of the escort service told police that she worked as many as eight calls a night and received \$150 per client. Her employer, Armand J. Girouard of Springfield received \$100. The woman claimed her boss was making \$10,000 a week and she made \$3,500 a week.

Do the math... that's 23 clients a week, and, if we give her the week-end off, that's nearly 5 clients a day. She told the police that "Northampton and Amherst are goldmines."

In October, State Police Trooper Christopher Wilcox posed as a client and called Seventh Heaven for an escort. The young woman who arrived at the Chicopee hotel Wilcox was using propositioned him and was promptly arrested. The state police searched Girouard's home and found a business ledger with names and phone numbers, a whip, condoms, and a credit card processing machine. Apparently, 12 women worked for Girouard and his daughter.

To make matters worse, the father and daughter allegedly attempted to have a witness in their case murdered. Girouard worked as a drug counselor at Baystate Medical Center and his daughter was a licensed practical nurse.

This arrest had been preceded in July by a bust involving two 19 year-old women who called their escort business Sugar-n-Spice.

The escort ads are worded in such a way as not to be illegal, and in order to see if prostitution activity is taking place, a sting must be set up. The question confronting police is just how much manpower should be directed toward this type of crime? Legalize or not?

TWO WORDS

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that there will always be men who are so lonely or horny they will seek women from whom to buy sex. All one has to do is say two words... Hugh Grant. The English actor, whose long-time companion is one of the world's top models and a fledgling actress, apparently just couldn't wait until he got back home and so had to try to buy a little oral sex from a street hooker in Los Angeles. His career still hasn't come back from his arrest.

LEGAL TENDER

So why not legalize it, license it, and tax it? The state and federal government have

99.3

ROCKS

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long been in the vice business. We do that with alcohol, tobacco, and gambling. And those three vices have undoubtedly ruined more lives than prostitution.

It's not a new idea. In 1949, the United Nations adopted a resolution in favor of the decriminalization of prostitution, which has been ratified by fifty countries (not including the United States). Many countries complied with decriminalization by decriminalizing prostitution per se, leaving all related activities criminal such as soliciting, advertising, etc. In 1973, the National Organization for Women passed a resolution supporting the decriminalization of prostitution.

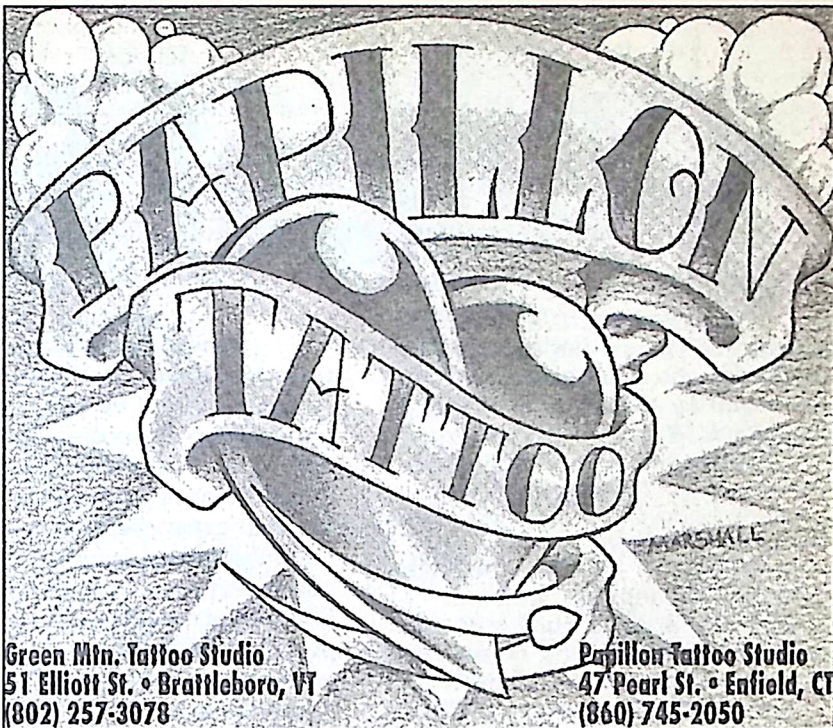
Legalized prostitution has reportedly worked well in Holland. Amsterdam's red light district is a major tourist destination. Of course, the abuses of legalized prostitution in Thailand is the other side of the coin. Young women frequently find themselves trapped in brothels and the country has an alarming HIV rate. Would legal brothels work here?

Since the mid-1970's, several counties in Nevada have allowed legal brothels, and many people have heard of both the Mustang Ranch and the Chicken Ranch. The brothels provide security for the prostitutes from the kind of violence they can face on the street and doctors come in regularly for health checks. The Prostitute's Education Network web site has a revealing look at the working conditions at the Nevada brothels. A sizable cut goes to the house, and the prostitutes literally live at the brothel for weeks at a time, making themselves available as many hours as they can. Is working in a factory less brutal?

In the last 20 years, San Francisco has been the focal point for legalization of prostitution and the formation of a union for hookers. Organizations such as COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) have achieved national attention for their agenda of prostitutes' rights. While their efforts have successfully raised a number of issues, prostitution is still not legal in San Francisco or any other part of California.

As old as the occupation is, the debate on the morality of prostitution is almost just as old. While many feminists have fought for a woman's right to control her body, a line has been drawn on the issue of prostitution. One fact, though, appears to be indisputable: As long as there are men craving sex, there will be women willing to sell it to them.

(Editor's note: The topics of homosexual and bisexual sex-for-sale will be visited in a future issue.)



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The Child Sex Slave Trade: A Global Epidemic

This article is presented to you on behalf of all the children who are currently enslaved by pimps and pornographers. It is written for and about kids, here in the Pioneer Valley and around the world. Children and teens will find useful information about ways to overcome abusers – even if they are parents, siblings or coaches. Runaways and kids being abused will find hotline phone numbers printed at the end of the article for free help right away. We'll unmask the trickery used by child molesters, and provide plans to help kids outsmart these criminals. Parents will find guidelines to protect their children from this insidious threat.

If you think that the evils of child prostitution, pornography, and rape can not desecrate your neighborhood, think again:

- 29% of all rape victims are younger than 11 years old

- The number of rapes in the US has risen by more than 500% since 1960

- In one survey, 86% of convicted rapists said they were regular users of pornography, and 57% admitting direct imitation of pornographic scenes they enjoyed in the commission of their rapes

- The creation of child pornography was involved in 62% of all child sexual abuse cases investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department

- Every year, one million children are forced into the multi-billion dollar sex slave trade -- exploited by pimps and pornographers for profit

- More children get STD's today than were affected by the polio epidemic of the late 1940's and early 1950's

The sale of children into slavery is a reality. According to the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, children around the world are kidnapped and sold for begging, adoption, medical experimentation, organ transplantation, criminal activities, pornography, and prostitution. Children are trafficked by the Mafia, pornographers, and their very own parents. Would you believe that vacationing businessmen rent babies for sexual purposes? Do you doubt the existence of child pimps? Not only are these ghastly anecdotes true, but cataclysmically, the child sex-slave trade corrodes the face of every nation.

Psychological torments imposed upon youngsters through such abuse reverberate for a lifetime. Worse still, the sexual exploitation of children strikes an early death knell for many of its victims. Raped and photographed for profit by pedophiles -- death from AIDS kills children.

This very blight has been addressed in a statement issued by the Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS at the Geneva conference on the Rights of the Child (Stockholm, 1990). The UN concludes that "The commercial sexual exploitation of children continues to be one of the most pernicious forms of child abuse... as sexually exploited children face the risk of infection with HIV..."

Because the creation of pornography is involved in over half

of all cases of child sexual abuse in the U.S., exploitation and abuse become synonymous. Moreover, there is considerable variation in the victims' backgrounds. Ferguson reports that child exploitation strikes every echelon of society, from infancy through early adulthood. According to Casa Alianza, 300,000 American runaways fleeing from incest, rape and violence fall prey to the sextrade industry every year. Other victims of child prostitution and pornography hail from state institutions. Still yet, some youngsters are sold outright by their parents, while others are forced into prostitution by pimps. But why?

The exploding number of child sex slaves results from a variety of causes. These include pornography itself, maldistribution of wealth, U.S. military occupation, legislation encouraging child exploitation/sexual tourism, and corrupt government officials. Whatever the cause and whoever the child, victims of child exploitation suffer unspeakable indignities, enduring daily defilement along with starvation, murder, unwanted pregnancies, STD's, AIDS, drug abuse, permanent psychological scarring and concomitant suicide.

THE INTERNATIONAL FACE OF CHILD PROSTITUTION

Every nation exhibits its own set of peculiar circumstances that propel unwilling children into

THE NURSE IS IN

Jessica
Faller-
Berger
RN

the sex trade industry. For instance, in the Philippines, child prostitution often follows upon the footsteps of deception, wherein impoverished parents sell their children into "wealthy marriages," unaware that such weddings offer their offspring only imprisonment in a brothel. In the Philippines, the prevalence of U.S. military bases populated by child molesters compounds the problem. According to *The New Our Bodies Our Selves*, every day approximately 6,500 U.S. military men buy "R&R" at Olongapo. Here, children as young as 13 are prostituted alongside their adult counterparts. The situation is exacerbated by a 1998 armed forces agreement between the U.S. and Philippines. This agreement permits U.S. military occupation of the Philippines' major seaports. It also encourages the U.S. Navy to utilize 22 Philippine cities for "R&R." According to the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, "R&R" is a euphemism for prostitution, "with accompanying child sexual abuse... and spread of AIDS and STD's."

The Center for the Protection of Children's Rights estimates that approximately 800,000 children are enslaved as prostitutes in Thailand. Contrasting numbers reported by Anti-Slavery International account for 200,000 Thai child prostitutes. This organization decries that in Thailand there is a relationship between tourism, drug culture and the German Mafia. In Bangkok, children are beaten and drugged if they refuse to service johns. Unable to escape from the armed bordellos where they are trapped, some children never see the light of day. Malnourished and anemic, an entire generation of the most powerless class pleases wealthy businessmen, invisible to all but those who abuse them.

Departing Thailand for India, *India Today* publishes a 1991 survey estimating the existence of 500,000 Child sex slaves. Many of these children are kidnapped from Nepal. According to the World

Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, these children are transported like cargo across the border to India, where they become sexual commodities. The age of children undergoing such enslavement drops ever younger. Even babies are abducted into this trade.

In Guatemala, children fleeing from sexually abusive parents suffer the degradation of prostitution to escape incest. A 1992 survey conducted by the CWO/CHLA, in conjunction with the *Guatemalan Medical College Review*, followed 143 homeless Guatemalan children. The ensuing interviews shed light upon the mind-boggling circumstances of their lives. One hundred percent of the children visiting the clinic had been sexually abused prior to homelessness. All 143 children, between the ages of 7 to 18 years old, were afflicted by STD's. These included herpes, gonorrhea, papillomatoses, trichomoniasis, chancroids, scabies, and HIV. Seven year old girls had been forced to sell their bodies in order to eat, servicing four or more grown men per day. None of the children used contraceptives. All of the children copped drugs. Inhaled solvents (such as paint thinner) rated the number one drug of choice due to availability and cost. Additionally, the children ingested crack, cocaine, barbiturates, hallucinogens, alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes. Many of these children eventually fall victim to AIDS or are murdered by the Guatemalan police. Bruce Harris of Covenant House eulogizes: "they are the poorest of the poor...abuse and abandonment make these children leave their homes and take to the streets, abuse and abandonment also make them die here."

In Brazil, economic disenfranchisement contributes to the traffic in children. Avaricious multinational corporation owners and CEO's subjugate factory working parents to brutal impoverishment.

In turn, female Brazilian children often support their entire families upon wages earned as prostitutes. In the poorest regions of Africa, the only way for many children to acquire food or relief supplies is to sell their bodies. Likewise, child prostitution is on the rise in Eastern Europe. And in Sri Lanka, an estimated 20,000 children are involved in the sex industry.

ECPAT Australia admonishes Denmark, Holland, and Sweden for their flagrant child sexual exploitation. These nations produced massive tomes of child pornography in the 1960's and 1970's. Following suit, criminal production of child porn videos escalated during the 1980's in Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands. Of note is the fact that in 1990, the Netherlands legalized the abuse of children in pornography by lowering the legal age of consent to *twelve*. Adding insult to injury, child pornography from decades gone by remains in circulation today, eternally abasing the children who lost their lives or innocence for the sake of adult entertainment.

FOR KIDS ONLY: HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF

The good news is that many child pornographers use predictable tricks to lure children into dangerous situations. You can learn about some of these tricks ahead of time, and then be prepared to act fast. This can afford you some power over pornographers. We'll do a few "What if" exercises to demonstrate the idea. It is very unfair that you should even have to think about protecting yourself from grown-ups, strangers or family. Nevertheless, a little bit of knowledge may help you a great deal in this unpredictable universe.

WHAT IF: A sad and worried looking little man in a nice suit tells you that he's upset because he can't find his puppy. He says, "Please, I need

SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

1. Before you go anywhere, make sure that someone else you trust knows where you are going, how to reach you, and when you will be home.
2. Child molesters pick on kids who are alone and who take shortcuts. Avoid shortcuts, and walk with friends.
3. It is illegal for anyone to touch you anywhere a bathing suit would cover. Run away from anyone attempting to touch you in these places, and tell your parents right away.
4. It is illegal for anyone to expose their private parts to you, or to ask you to touch them or handle body waste -- call the police if this happens!
5. Tell your parents about anyone who wants to take your picture.
6. Never open the door when home alone.
7. Children do not have to keep secrets about anything that they do with grownups or older siblings.
8. Learn how to dial 911, how to call the police, and how to use directory assistance by dialing 411.
9. Be especially careful at video arcades, roller rinks, ice rinks, parks, and record shops.

you to help me find my puppy. He's lost and I'm afraid he'll run into the street and get hit by a car, and he's so cute. Please, help me."

THEN YOU: Run away as fast as you can. If you are not near home, ask for help at the nearest store, police station, or library. Because, even though he looks nice, the man might be trying to con you into a dangerous situation from which you may be unable to escape.

DID YOU KNOW: "A Portland Oregon news reporter tested children in a park and asked them to help him find a lost puppy. Had he been a child molester, he could have abducted over 80% of the children because they were willing to go with him."

REMEMBER: Grown ups should ask other grown ups for help -- no matter what, even if they are experiencing an emergency.

WHAT IF: A stranger, guidance counselor, coach or one of your parent's friends offers you gifts, money, toys, drugs, or other free things

whenever you are alone together.

THEN YOU: Refuse the offers. Leave this person and immediately tell your parents about what happened.

DID YOU KNOW: Many child molesters win children over by giving them special attention and gifts. In this way they establish themselves as a friend and gain your trust. Many child molesters give children drugs to make them unable to fight back, and to confuse them about the abuse. **REMEMBER:** Always check with your parents

before accepting gifts. Anyone who tries to give children drugs is a criminal who should be reported to the police. If a grown-up tries to give you drugs, don't argue, just run away fast, and call 911.

WHAT IF: A policeman stops you on the street and commands "Your parents have been in a serious car accident. You must come with me now because you are wanted at the hospital."

THEN YOU: Ask the policeman for his name, take a good look at him, make a mental note of his appearance and run away as fast as you can. Call 911 and tell the police what happened

DID YOU KNOW: According to Dr. Gene Abel, the average child molester will abuse up to 360 children in a lifetime. Child pornographers who wear police uniforms as costumes are especially dangerous. The badge of authority easily convinces a child to go with a rapist, wherever they tell the child to go.

REMEMBER: Adults in uniform, such as paramedics, police, firefighters and military never need children to escort them anywhere. Never go anywhere by yourself with a stranger in a uniform, no matter what they say. If a police wants you for something, first go home and call your local police department to check their credentials.

WHAT IF: Your stepfather yells at you because you want privacy while changing and taking a shower. He tells you that there is nothing about the body to be ashamed of, saying "You shouldn't think you're so special that you should require all these fancy arrangements." He also plays games with you that involve taking clothes off and getting into strange positions. He tells you not to tell anybody or he'll kill you. (Maybe your situation is a little different from this, but some of it is the same.)

THEN YOU: Will be able to find safe, confidential help from people who are especially trained to help kids who are being abused. **CALL HOTLINE ARCH at 1-413-733-7100.**

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a 24 hour hotline for kids who've been raped or abused. The stepfather might lie about the abuse. Even if he is nice to you sometimes, he will protect himself by keeping you scared, confused, and silent. He may say, "You are crazy" or "You are imagining things," or "This is our little secret," or "What we are doing is good, it's society that is evil for calling it wrong." No matter what he says, this stepfather (or brother/father/uncle/grandparent/mother) is acting like a criminal. You have done nothing wrong, and have the right to be safe. If you can not tell another parent, there are people out there who can help you, and ways out of this very scary situation.

REMEMBER: You deserve safety and protection, and to live in a home free from abuse. No matter what someone tells you, you are entitled to privacy and control of your own body. Here are some phone numbers and resources for people in your situation. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE! DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL ANY OF THESE NUMBERS. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED. THERE IS HOPE AND THERE IS HELP.**

HOTLINES FOR KIDS WHO ARE BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED

National Hotlines for Children

1-800-621-4000
NATIONAL RUNAWAY SWITCHBOARD
National 24 hour confidential crises hotline for runaways or youth thinking about running away. Services include information about shelters, counseling, medical help, legal aid. You can safely report abuse to the switchboard because it is confidential and authorities never trace the call.

1-800-442-HOPE
NATIONAL YOUTH CRISIS HOTLINE

National 24 hour hotline for kids contemplating suicide. Also offers confidential crises intervention, advocacy and counseling for kids struggling with sexual abuse and substance abuse.

1-800-4-A-CHILD
CHILD HELP USA
24 hour national hotline for children who are victims of sexual abuse, offering crises counseling and interventions for a safe home through Child Protective Services.

Local Hotlines

1-413-733-7100
24 HOURS A DAY HOTLINE ARCH
Sexual Abuse and Rape Crises
Hotline associated with Baystate Medical Center -- provides immediate emotional counseling along with safe placement and professional referrals for long term counseling and support groups.

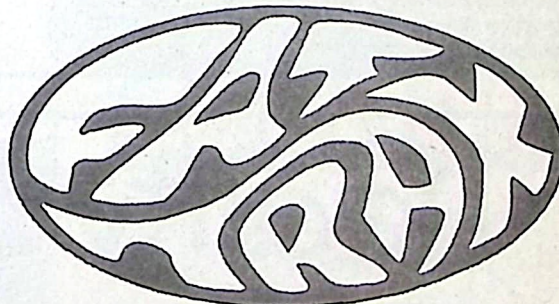
SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Teach children what to do if someone wants to engage them in any way that makes them uncomfortable. Do not assume that kids know that they have the right to their own personal space. Teach them about it.
2. Never leave children unattended -- especially in a car.
3. Notice when a stranger pays special attention to your child and inquire further.
4. Notice if your child avoids coming home, and gently find out why.
5. Be alert to unexplained toys or money and find out who gave them to your child and why.
6. Periodically make sure your child can remember their own number and address.
7. If your spouse is abusing you, there is a very good chance that your children are being abused as well.
8. Counseling does not protect your children from abuse. Children need immediate safety more than they need to talk about how it feels to be abused.
9. Because it is so humiliating, children seldom lie about sexual abuse.



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Burton Customs, Pro Models \$459 \$349
All Other Remaining Boards
Priced to MOVE
Burton Freestyle Step-in Boot
w/Binding \$299
Burton Ruler, Freestyle and
Viking Boots 25% off

CORNER RT. 5 & EAST ST. EASTHAMPTON 586-8766
CHECK OUT OUR NEW STORE ON RT. 83
EAST LONGMEADOW 781-5142 (ACROSS FROM CLUB MEADOWS)

1-413-733-1588
RAPE CRISIS HOTLINE FOR TEENS

**Local Agencies Helping Kids
in Crises** (not hotlines)

(413) 773-5438
ROOM TO GROW
A residential home for pregnant or
parenting teens aged 13-19, with a
focus on independent living.

(413) 586-6807
YWCA
Support group for girls who've been
sexually abused, Wednesdays at

3:15. Young Mothers Support and
Education Group from 3:00 to 4:30
on Tuesdays.

1-413-732-3121
TEEN TRANSITIONAL
LIVING PROGRAM
Comprehensive residential program
for parenting teens ages 13-19 that
provides stable housing, parenting
support services and life skills for
teen mothers in Springfield.

413-586-6807
YWCA SKIPTON HOUSE
TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM

Provides support, housing advocacy,
child advocacy, vocational/educa-
tional advocacy and subsidized
housing for formerly battered
women and their children.

(References available upon request.)



**Parents: Indicators of
childhood sexual abuse**
(The greater the number and frequency,
the higher the likelihood of abuse.)

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

1. Hypersexual behavior
2. Enuresis, nightmares
3. Peri-rectal irritation -- requires
immediate medical intervention
4. Regression, baby talk
5. Sudden uncharacteristic aggres-
sion
6. Inserting objects into
genitals/rectum
7. Inexplicable phobias

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KIDS
(as above, plus)

1. Psychosomatic
complaints
2. Precocious sexuality
3. Scholastic difficul-
ties

ADOLESCENTS
(as above plus)

1. Serious depres-
sion/suicidal ideation
2. Distrust
3. Self-Destruction:
anorexia, bulimia,
drug abuse, promiscu-
ity, cutting or burning
self, frequent acciden-
tal injuries
4. Confusion over sex-
ual orientation
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Confessions to the Thought Police



JOHN AND THE LORD'S SANDALS CONFESIONS TO THE THOUGHT POLICE Love Light Records

As an orthodox Druid, my religious sentiments clearly lay somewhere else. But when this disc arrived in the mail, I decided to give it a fair shake. As a general rule, I dislike proselytizing and have made a point of banishing the usual suspects from my door. Nonetheless, these folks do have a certain amount of talent: If you can get by the lyrics, this disc is pleasant enough. (Actually, Christian rock is quite popular, though more so in other parts of the country. Even Columbia House gives it a section and catalogue of its own.)

From their freshly-scrubbed appearance on the booklet's cover to

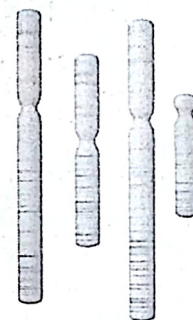
the exuberance of the vocals, this is obviously a labor of love. Leader John Barron shows promise as a writer, and the arrangements are pretty good as well. The playing is tasteful and more than merely competent... more folk-rockish than gospel. The singing is quite good and production is well above average as well.

Except for bassist Justin Folts and drummer Tim Griffin, this seems to be a family effort, with the remainder of the group sharing the same last name (most likely John, his wife and two daughters?). Their ministry, Love Light Ministries, is out of Hatfield, and everything else about the disc is also local. They obviously have strong feelings, and this is reflected in their sound. All in all, professional sounding, sincere and heartfelt, and a significant release for Christian music devotees. (Like the unique name too.)

(Love Light Ministries, POB
158, Hatfield MA 01038)

- Meathook Williams

Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark
The OMD Singles



ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK THE OMD SINGLES Virgin

OMD always got a bit of a raw deal in the States. Huge in Europe and Britain, they never quite cracked America (barring a flicker of attention for a track on the *Pretty in Pink* soundtrack in '86). Yet, for better or worse, OMD was frighteningly influential upon the pop music scene of the early 80's, and consequently helped define musical trends for a better part of the decade.

Rooted in the dark electronic scene developing in late 70's Germany, OMD borrowed from trance rock bands like Neu! and men-machines Kraftwerk to fashion a sort of electro-pop that was entirely new to the music scene. These early experiments landed them a record contract with the just formed (now defunct) Factory Records. Home to a stable of the unstable, Factory was the breeding grounds for acts like Joy Division and Throbbing Gristle, and considered the elite label for cutting edge of post punk.

Much like their contemporaries Human League, OMD took Gary Numan one step further, delivering minimalist electronica and a combination of bizarre lyricism with a pop underpinning. Their first three LP's were Brit-only releases, and carefully straddled the fine line between art and pop. No subject

reviews

seemed off kilter: Hiroshima ("Enola Gay"), physics ("Electricity", "Tesla Girls") and a smattering of history ("Joan of Arc", "Maid of Orleans"). The British music scene was quick to take note of this new trend, and the intellectualism of early Human League and OMD disappeared like an ice cube in a cup of coffee. Their sound was the template for a host of overwrought dross that passed for pop in the early 80's, which inhibits some of the nostalgic feelings one might harbor for these guys. They really have to be docked several stars for being, either directly or indirectly responsible for such criminally limp acts as Soft Cell, Pet Shop Boys, Depeche Mode, Dead or Alive and even the mighty Duran squared. (Human League also partly to blame...)

The **OMD Singles** is an 18 track compilation covering their operating years of 1980-1996. All of the early stuff is here (**Souvenir, Messages**), but a complete lack of tracks from 1983's magnificent experimental **Dazzle Ships** is a bit puzzling, and may steer some early 80's kids away.

The de-evolution of OMD from cutting edge electroids to sappy dance fodder can be chronicled nicely here. After 1984's **Junk Culture**, an inexorable slide towards mediocrity began. The departure of co-founder Paul Humphreys in 1989 was the final nail in the coffin. Already on autopilot, OMD was left in the hands of sole surviving member Andy McCluskey, who promptly steered the plane into the ground. A couple of dance club pop hits ("Sailing on the Seven Seas") were the precursor to 1994's dreadful Barry White 'Love Theme' release ("Dream of Me"). By 1995, OMD had become increasingly irrelevant, and more reliant on bad Tears For Fears stylings and lifted Dead or Alive mid tempo balladry—the innovators had finally been reduced to imitating their own undertalented spawn.

OMD will certainly be remembered as pioneers of synthesizer based music, but their legacy is one of lost promise. The taste of dis-

covery that infuses the early material comprises only the first half of this CD, and leaves one unfulfilled.

Unless you are someone who gets all misty when Molly Ringwald is on TV, you would probably be better served seeking their early albums on Virgin.

- Carwreck deBangs



VARIOUS ARTISTS **RED HOT & RHAPSODY** Polygram

In 1990, The Red Hot organization dropped into the market with **Red Hot & Blue**, a compilation of (then) contemporary artists covering songs by Cole Porter. Unlike a number of tribute albums of the eighties, the artists chosen were from different labels and different genres. However, like a number of tribute albums that came before it, there seemed to be a few artists that were somewhat unclear on the concept. Their very appearance made you wonder if they had ever even listened to the artist that they were "covering."

Red Hot & Rhapsody, the twelfth addition to the Red Hot Juggernaut, is very similar to that first record so long ago. This time around, the songs are taken from the catalogue of George and Ira Gershwin. As usual, there are some strong inclusions here, most notably Morcheeba's "Summertime" and Bobby Womack & the Roots' interpretation of "Summertime." There

are the safe arrangements by popular artists, like Natalie Merchant's "But Not For Me," Sinead O'Connor's "Someone To Watch Over Me" and David Bowie with Angelo Badalamenti's "A Foggy Day (In London Town)." There are also the "liberal" tracks, like Stereolab's tri-pedalic "S Wonderful/Rhapsody in Blue" and Money Mark's selection. In it, he samples Peter Sellers singing George Gershwin's name and throws it overtop a funky little groove. Unfortunately, though, this compilation seems to be dominated by artists who insist on "making the songs their own," contemporizing them beyond recognition and losing the beauty of the songs themselves.

The Red Hot records all have their ups and downs, but this one seems to have fewer shining moments than the rest. All of their releases seem to start with an interesting concept, but in this case, the concept outweighs the actual execution.

- Phil Straub

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Luaka Bop**

If you know David Byrne only as the edgy former front man of Talking Heads, you're in for a real treat. For more than a decade now, Byrne has championed and in turn compiled and released a number of ethnic recordings concentrating on Brazilian and Latin American artists. The first, eleven years ago, was the well recieved **Beleza Tropical**. Successful as it was trend setting, it seems to be a work in progress with volume two just out. I'd like to devote a separate review to that disc sometime in the near future, but this time I'd like to review these recent releases, also on his Luaka Bop label.

No matter which side of the "national language" debate you favor, the fact is Latino culture is creeping ever northward with sizable Hispanic communities throughout the nation. "Rock en Español" is quickly making it's presence felt almost everywhere. And even if you're "Hispanignorant", there's plenty to enjoy. Not "salsa," this music is unencumbered by particular styles, much the same as any other rock music. Luaka Bop has come out with three in particular that I should tell

you about.

The first is a disc by Venezuela's chic Los Amigos Invisibles (The Invisible Friends) is entitled **The New Sound Of The Venezuelan Gosadera**. It's a rather hefty collection of upbeat, rhythmical dance tunes. Ranging from retro-lounge to humorous hip-hop stylings, their visionary sound is universal in its appeal. There's even a song called "Disco Anal" (yep, the Anal Disco). The band claims to have been influenced by bands like the Chili Peppers and Primus, as well as by David Lynch films. This is evident in their sound, but then nobody else sounds quite like them.

Next up are Mexico's Los de Abajo (Those Guys From Below... aka Hell) and devilishly entertaining they are. Once again, conventions are thrown to the winds, but never enough to keep you off the dance-floor. Great horn charts mix with exuberant singing and Latin rhythms, propelling each song along and not letting up. Lush accordion parts remind me more of Colombia than Mexican Norteño or, say, Tex-Mex. There is, however, some inspired mariachi trumpet work and some great acoustic guitar as well. Abajo always manage to sound bigger than their small combo (seven hell guys in all) might insinuate. Full force stuff throughout and the most traditional disc of the three.

As might be expected, I've saved my favorite for last. Bloque's self-titled CD is my absolute favorite album of any type right now and I can not keep it out of the player for long. This is a bona fide Grammy contender if there ever was one. Absolutely perfect in every respect, it amazes me more with every listening. The band is from Colombia and manages to successfully meld cumbia, vallenata and rock into a delectable confection. Who else could snatch a riff from the first Led Zeppelin album and make it work in a Latin context? Who would even try? Truly scorching guitars awash in feedback and laden with distortion meet haunting vocals. And vital bass playing alongside fantastic percussion dazzle the listener at every turn. I can't begin to say enough in support of this group. This could be THE great Latin

crossover album, the one that truly opens the rest of America's mind to this ever-looming musical force. There are reggae underpinnings as well (reggae has long been popular in South America, perplexingly not so in Mexico) along with snippets of other influences. "Sin Lagrimas" ("Without Tears") is a James Bondish twang-fest with bone chilling vocals. And the old cumbia classic "La Pluma" ("The Feather") recieves a nice facelift (almost as good as Peregoyo's 1972 version). Each cut is as memorable as the last; you really will find yourself humming at least a few of them before too long. If you're going to buy a new disc in the near future, make it this one!

Unlike fellow Luaka Boppers King Chango's CD of a couple of years ago, none of the singing on these three releases is in English, but you hardly need to be multi-lingual to enjoy any of them. The graphics are splendid (after all, Byrne is a Rhode Island School Of Design alumnus), and the liner notes generally copious though again, largely in Spanish. The output of Luaka Bop's release now clocks in at 33 albums and, though virtually all have been notable, these three are really as good as it gets.

(www.luakabop.com / gozadera@truevision.net / bloque@nuestrorock.com & www.nuestrorock.com)

(Luaka Bop is distributed by Warner Bros., 3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank CA 91505-4694)
- Meathook Williams

**BECK
MUTATIONS
Geffen**

Beck's current release, **Mutations**, is certainly going to raise some eyebrows among his fans. Originally designed to be a small-level release on his own Bong-Load label, Geffen strong armed their way into the picture to grab it for their own. On the surface, this seemed to be an ill-advised decision, as **Mutations** has much more in common with his early indy releases than the attention grabbing major label monsters **Odelay** and **Mellow**

reviews

Gold. His frat guy following will likely be both puzzled and disappointed — critics, however, will likely need restraints to keep from touching themselves in an improper fashion over this one.

With the luxury of back to back hit albums, Beck is able to indulge himself thoroughly. Country



rock, Beatles, Syd Barrett, Moody Blues, old school Moog effects, sitars — the swirling influences of Beck's past blend into a semi-cohesive whole. (Is this starting to sound like Aloha Steamtrain?)

On first listening, I confess, I would have aligned myself with the hatheads. "People are going to hate this," I thought. But then repeated listenings started to reveal a more subtle undercurrent to the record. Like Ween's **12 Country Greats**, Beck has seemingly set out to create an ersatz country-rock collection, albeit replete with his unique array of sound effect trimmings. An affectation of world weariness out of sync with his tender years permeates most of the eleven tracks here, but like Ween, the astute listener can detect the tongue firmly in cheek. "When the road is full of nails, garbage pails and darkened jails, and their tongues are full of heartless tales... tell me it's nobody's fault, nobody's fault, but my own." Beck drawls as if each phrase was a poison to be avoided, and it nearly too painful to continue on to the next verse. Pedal steel guitar lends a country authenticity to the whole project, and his country-tinged lyrics manage to outstrip most authentic country productions. (And listen for the barnyard animals in "Canceled Check.")

Only the samba-tinged "Tropicalia" breaks the dourness of the country dressings — upbeat and hinting at the retro-cool ambience that fueled his last two releases. "Bottle of Blues" and "O Maria" recall the jauntiness of solo Syd Barrett material, confidently strutting despite an imminent oncoming date with disaster. A final treat is the bonus track hidden at the end of the album closer, "Static." Buried after several minutes of silence, the unnamed and uncredited tune is the real gem of this record. Drawing on several Beatles songs as inspiration, and propelled by a thunderous bass line, it is the album's only true rocker, and strangely enough, the one song that ties it all together in a logical fashion. "Looking back at some dead world that looks so new..." Beck has taken several dead worlds, and repopulated them with his own take on humanity. Recommended for those who remember the past, but are doomed to repeat it. Not recommended for those who automatically think **Wired** or **Blow by Blow** whenever someone mentions the word "Beck." Be brave, little soldier.

- Carwreck deBangs



**JAMES CARTER
IN CARTERIAN
FASHION
Atlantic**

If you're a big fan of Kenny G you might just as well stop reading this review right now. This disc is real jazz, thoughtfully created and carried out with inspired improvisa-

tion, an album of 10 awesome tracks and no gimmicks. Even moreso than Joshua Redmond (I'm a big fan of his too), Carter is the torchbearer carrying true jazz into the new millennium.

This is Carter's fifth album as a leader, and he's not quite thirty. He's had a full apprenticeship with such luminaries as Lester Bowie and Julius Hemphill of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, one of the most far reaching aggregates in jazz history. Though he's often compared with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, he reminds me more of Eric Dolphy. Though he principally plays tenor sax, he plays all of them and even a delightful



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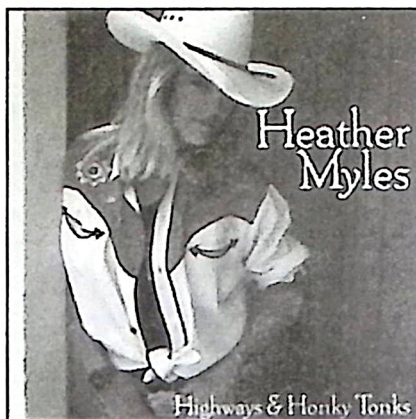
growling bass clarinet on "Odyssey." He makes his instruments howl and moan during some solos, yet keeps it all plain and somber on others. And he's joined here by a stellar ensemble: Craig Taborn, Henry Butler, and Cyrus Chestnut on Hammond and a perfectly suited rhythm section comprised of bassist Jaribu Shahid and, alternately, Tani Tabbal or Leonard King behind the traps. His brother, P-Funker Kevin Carter, makes a welcome appearance on guitar (the only electrified material, and still rather unembellished), and Dwight Adams shines on trumpet. The rest of the crew dazzles too and this, to my ears, is how small combo jazz is meant to sound. The tunes are all captivating and the production minimal. Why aren't more players using this time-tested formula? Nothing here could possibly be improved upon. It's all just superb music making.

If you like classic jazz with cascading solos over solid, straight ahead ensemble playing, this is a release sure to please.

(Atlantic Recording Co., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, NY NY 10019)
- Meathook Williams

HEATHER MYLES HIGHWAYS AND HONKY TONKS Rounder

Someday it just might happen. Someday you could tune in to a country station or perhaps CMTV



and actually hear some country music — real country music. Until then...

On her third studio album (she's also got a killer live CD as well) Heather Myles dishes out more of the real thing, and it's my favorite to date. (Her first was released seven years ago, but she's still not a household name — to the great shame of the industry.) Though there are a very few uncompromising women making this kind of music (Joy Lynn White and Lee Ann Womack spring to mind), most of what emanates from Nashville is pop. (Yes, I suppose Shania has talent, but it has precious little to do with country music.)

But on this disc you can find a hefty dose of heartache and steel guitar. Yep, and she writes 'em all herself to boot. Clever but meaningful lyrics intermingle with authentic, tearjerkin' playing. She has a wonderful duet with Mr. Country, Merle Haggard, on "No One Is Gonna Love

You Better" and she holds her own and then some. It's an instant classic. "Who Did You Call Darlin'" is a nice Tex-Mex number with the requisite button accordion (no credit given for some reason... 'zat you Flaco?). Another highpoint is the only non-original: Charlie Pride's megahit "Kiss An Angel Good Morning" and, even as a major Pride fan, I have to say I like this one even more. Her superb voice is distinct, and finds a home "right quick." "Broken Heart For Sale" is as moving as anything Loretta or Emmylou have ever come out with, and that's surely saying something. It all sounds effortless in the way only a major talent can make it seem.

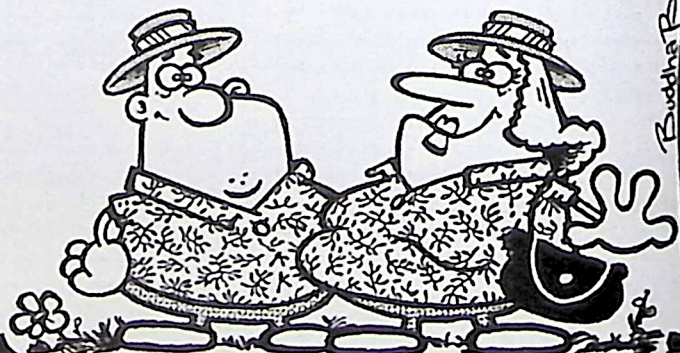
The songs all have a hook, but not the inane crapola you hear on the radio. She really is the sweetheart of the rodeo, and my absolute fave since she burst onto the scene in 1992. When we look back on this period of country music, Heather Myles will undoubtedly loom large with the handfull of standout artists that were... well, artists.

My only complaint is my standard one; at thirty-seven minutes it could be longer. But that means that you'll be hungry for more.

(Heather's Website:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~vandall/>)
(Rounder Records, One Camp Street, Cambridge MA 02140)
- Meathook Williams

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MADS ERIKSEN SUBURBAN COWBOY Holographic		<p>Swede who likes Stevie Ray Vaughn way too much.</p>	<p>The part in <i>Mrs. Doubtfire</i> when Williams first dresses up like a woman, but you can tell it's just Williams wearing a dress and how could the rest of the cast be so stupid not to see it.</p>
THE BOO RASLEYS KINGSIZE members.tripod.com/~workshy/index.htm		<p>These always intriguing pop experimentalists continue to play off in a field all by themselves. Sometimes misfiring but often brilliant, Kingsize is a colossal patchwork of punchy orchestrally-tinged Beatlesesque tracks.</p>	<p>Similar to <i>Popeye</i>... interesting until you think, "What the fuck is this?! Robin as Popeye?"</p>
THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH QUENCH Go! Discs		<p>In an interview the South once described their own music as "insipid." So with Paul Heaton and Co. it's always about the effectiveness of their acerbically nasty or ironically horny lyrics. At their best on tracks like "Perfect 10," and their blandest with clunkers like "Pockets."</p>	<p>The bits in <i>Fisher King</i> when Williams is running around naked and really hairy in Central Park.</p>
KAHIMI KARIE KAHIMI KARIE Minty Fresh/ Trattoria		<p>Aided by Beck, Cornelius, Momus, Mike Alway, Pizzicato Five and other hipper-than-thou types, Karie debuts with a solid disc of funky/smooth cuts tailor-made for impressing West Village trendoids.</p>	<p>That trippy heaven movie with all that new-fangled computer animation crap and Williams is dead.</p>

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Jumanji.

Second disc from ex-shoegazer-Slowdivers. Slightly more up-tempo than their previous output, but these guys can still outglum Robert Smith and outsulk Reznor and Manson put together.

All the sad parts in *Good Will Hunting* when Robin gets all teary and Matt Damon acts like an asshole.

Reissue of hard-to-find gems of this underrated early 90's band. Over 35 tracks long (2+ hours), perfect recap of their brief breezy career. Fans of Heavenly, St. Etienne or Billy Bragg should all find something here.

In *Dead Poet's Society*, when Williams tells one of those snobby rich dickheads to believe in true love and they do.

Heartbreak out for vengeance disguised as friendly guitar pop. Led by Wedding Present's constantly bitter David Gedge, Cinerama complains incessantly about cheatin' lovers 'n' sleepless nights, then pairs it with warm xylophone and rich string arrangements.

Williams' off-screen "fuck the nanny" escapades.

Choose a catch-phrase: Beck-sters, Keyboard Wankers, Devo-philiacs, Whiteboy Boogie Boyz... etc. On release #2 from this nerdy pair they wander through darker alleyways and hang out in seedier haunts. Good stuff (if somewhat derivative).

These guys probably wear red and silver space suits when performing live. Mork would be proud.

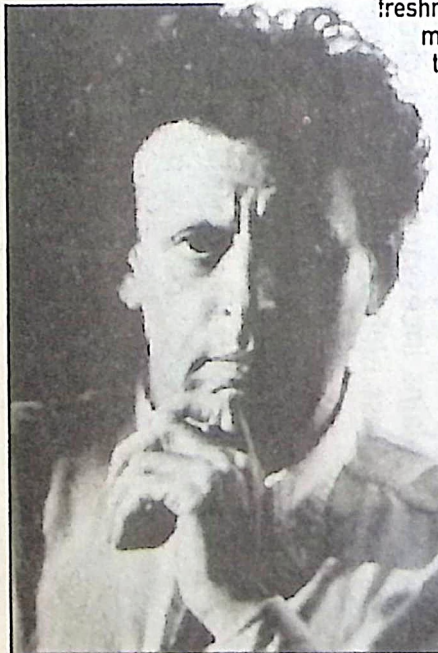
boyamidiart

carwreck debangs

The second week of January brought a rare double treat for fans of the avant garde classical scene in the area. The recently renovated Calvin Theater played host on back to back evenings to two of the heavyweight postmodern acts of the last two decades: the Kronos Quartet and the Philip Glass Ensemble.

A showing of the film *Koyaanisqatsi* was the backdrop for Philip Glass' minimalist sonic mandalas, as the nine piece ensemble (including Phil himself) performed the soundtrack live in the orchestra pit. This performance was quite a coup for the Calvin and Northampton, as it was one of only four American performances slated for this year (NYC, Boston and LA making up the rest of the tour). The film's decidedly grim outlook has dated a bit since it's initial 1983 release, but the message — "life out of balance" is aptly portrayed in dizzying high speed photography. Whirlwind scenes of traffic, escalators, assembly lines and malls are juxtaposed with expansive shots of canyons, rivers and majestic natural panoramas. Man's insignificance in the face of nature is emphasized, and the high speed photography gives an insect-like slant to modern society. A feast for Luddites, it is a powerful condemnation of modern mechanized society. If there was ever a film that would make you quit your day job, this is it. Time may have sapped some of the

freshness of the film but the music was the main reason that most were in attendance. Consisting of five synthesizer players, three woodwinds, female voice and former synth player Michael Riesman conducting, the Ensemble made brisk work of the soundtrack. It would be hard to describe any of Philip Glass' work as warm, but *Koyaanisqatsi* comes closer than anything in his canon to listener friendly. Alternating between slow hypnotic trances



and frenetic barrages of high speed note clusters, the music perfectly complements each scene as it is presented. Like the film, the music was powerful and occasionally disorienting. I think it is one of the most successful collaborations that Philip Glass has undertaken, and the uncharacteristically relaxed demeanor of the performers (and composer) was an indication that, unlike *Einstein on the Beach*, they genuinely enjoyed playing this material. Just wonder if they saw themselves in last year's *South Park* XMas episode...

The previous evening the stage was graced by the Kronos Quartet. They have always been closely allied with the minimalist scene, and pieces by Glass, Terry Riley and Steve Reich are not strangers to their repertoire. This tour, however, promoted their new collection of early music. Resplendent in matching velvet outfits, they were the picture of modern cool. The first set consisted entirely of early music selections — Partch's adaption of ancient Greek scales featured the skittish string effects they are known for. Pieces by Marchaut interspersed interesting ensemble tonalities throughout the first set. It wasn't until the second set, however, that things really started to cook. It is difficult to think of a string quartet as attention grabbing concert fare: I mean this stuff was invented to be courtly background music and salon entertainment. But freed of the constraints of the early music theme, Kronos really began to shine. Semi-successful experiments with taped accompaniment in the first set stretched the string quartet definition, but left one wanting. The Steve Reich piece, "Different Trains" changed that perception quickly. At 25 minutes, it is one of their most challenging pieces. Snippets of interviews with train conductors were played on tape, and the phrases' changing vocal tones were mimicked by a corresponding viola or cello lines. Smiles all around indicated that the quartet was finally warming to the material — vigorous playing that shone for the first time in the evening. Four encores, including a delightfully elegant pizzicato-kalimba effect for a Gambian song from their most successful release, 1991's *Pieces of Africa* closed out the over two-hour performance. A final note: a fond adieu and passing of the cello mantle from Joan Jeanrenaud to current cellist Jennifer Culp.

These two evenings were perfectly suited to the environs of the new Calvin, and quite a feather in their cap. It certainly made a perfect match for consecutive evenings. Not what most rock n' roll folk would call stunning, but an exquisite change of pace, and a huge gulp of fresh air for the classical fiends of the area. Culture tests are positive.

DAY DATE TIME WED. MAR. 10 9pm-1am	Baystate Hotel NORTHAMPTON	<p>You are cordially invited to the</p> <p>CD RELEASE PARTY</p> <p>1998 COMPILATION CD featuring a playing of the CD followed by LIVE PERFORMANCES by</p> <p>Bamboo Steamers WARE RIVER CLUB RAY MASON BAND</p>	<p>Northampton Music Festival</p> <p>Sponsored by La Veracruzana and The Valley Advocate</p> <p>Support the NMF and have a blast! Save the date: 1999 NMF APRIL 28 - MAY 2</p>	Baystate Hotel NORTHAMPTON	DAY DATE TIME WED. MAR. 10 9pm-1am
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wise alec's guide to valley music

The local scene has always been slightly unstable and unfocused, leaving some talented bands by the wayside in the apathetic 90's. It is amazing that it took this long for someone to figure out that a joining of forces and resources would be a boon to the scene. Anthony Wescott has done the local area proud with his PAPER CUTS releases. Conveniently packaged cassette singles give everyone a chance to check out local music for a limited amount of cash ('a buck a slice').

From the near-famous to the obscure, the Paper Cuts series covers enough ground to please almost any rock fan. It is generally lo-fi in production, and that suits much of the material just fine.

The core group of artists revolves around the band Humbert, and six of the first eleven cassette releases derive somehow from that band. Anthony Wescott himself serves up one of the catchier releases, a solo Jonathan Richman-ish ode to necrophelia, "I Like 'em Dead." In a similar vein are solo releases from Humberters Ari Vais and Henning. Henning's off-kilter carnival is a slightly goofy ride, but exits on a nice coda ("Mr. Curmudgeon"). Ari Vais' "Accident Airlines" shows strong and quirky songwriting skills, and a sense for the obscure shared with bandmate Anthony (and Jonathan as well). Humbert themselves contribute the Police-like "Alone in Your Victorian," and the combination of personnel delivers a tight and intelligent tune. Eclectic amusement that bears watching. Further from the Humbert axis are Lord Russ' Syd Barrett workout, the odd but appropriate "Spongey Sponge Sponge." Fans of Carnaby Street era stuff should check out this one, Yeah Baby!! Girl Simpson is more obscure, and has a Worcester contact address, but contains the Wescott penned "Mouth to Mouth," a mid 80's style pun-kette tune. It harkens back to a time when people thought the Go-Go's were kooky punks. Fun and poppy.

In the non-Humbert category reside the remaining releases, and as could be expected, it's a more diverse representation of the local scene. Tizzy is perhaps the most well known of the local artists here. An EP on Pop Narcotic gave them some national attention in '96-97. The track "The Underground Eats Its Own" lacks the ferociousness of some of their live material, but succeeds nicely on a more subtle level. Similar to Kristin Hersh or later Throwing Muses, it's a preview of an upcoming CD release. See them live if you can. King Radio is a collection of well known local musicians, featuring former members of the Scud Mt. Boys, Behemoth and the Cheetahs. "I-95" is tight pop/rock, and like Tizzy, they have an air of a band that really has its act together — another band to watch. Check out their CD on Tar Hut.

On the other end of the spectrum are two unrelated, but very different bands. Architectural Metaphor deliver an out-of-character two minute Hammond driven pop romp featuring two different female vocalists ("The Temple Song"). Better known as space rockers ready to stretch out like Pink Floyd on a mushroom induced vision-quest (you may have seen them opening for like-minded Hawkwind or Ozric Tentacles), this short song reveals a little shown facet of the band. This is a preview of their next release, but look for their recent CD on the Italian label, Black Widow. The Mitchells' "Sounded Like a 155" is quirky art-punk, like something Joy Division could be doing now if they hadn't hung it up so soon. Like Volcano Suns-lite or a poppier Mission of Burma, the Mitchells rely on an underlying icy seriousness that is simultaneously both affected and refreshing. Look for an imminent release from them. Ribboncandy rounds out the initial eleven releases with "Staring at the Ceiling." It is an extremely pop friendly tune with the carefree abandon of Papas Fritas combined with some indy-oomph. It is taken from a recent 8 song cassette-only release.

A pretty formidable collection of local talent is on display in these eleven cassettes. With more releases to follow, Paper Cuts has the potential to bring quite a lot of music to the public eye. Check your local record store, wave some cash at them, and demand the whole collection—you won't be disappointed.

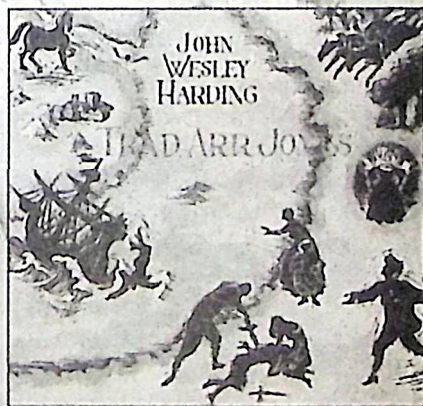
— Alec Drouillet

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OLD SCHOOL

MATT SMITH ART



PHIL STRAUB

Comedy Central recently overran the film *Something Wild*, and I kept running into the same scene over and over again: Jeff Daniels runs into some "gas and sip" for supplies and passes by a group of kids out front. They've formed a circle, and one is rapping while the rest keep the beat. I love this scene, because to me it epitomizes the early days of rap (even though the film itself was shot in 1986), harkening back to the revisionist history of doowop, where kids could be found harmonizing underneath a streetcorner light.

While a case could be made (and certainly has been) for the origins of rap being rooted in the DJ booths and various clubs and house parties throughout NYC in the mid to late 70s, just as strong an argument should be focused toward the Last Poets, Lightnin' Rod and other streetcorner prophets who would wax poetic on life, love and the politics of the day. These are the very people who paved the way for artists like the Sugarhill Gang, who, legend has it, were overheard rapping their own lyrics overtop of a recording of Chic's "Good Times."

Of course, if Sylvia Robinson, head honcho of Sugar Hill Records and long time industry player (think "Pillow Talk" and the fifties hit, "Love Is Strange") hadn't been at this party, history may have been a little different. As it was, the Sugarhill Gang received a one-way ticket into the studios and another success story was born. Not that the label was dependent on one band... far from it. As history (and a number of recent compilations that Rhino Records has put together focusing on the label) will attest, Sugar Hill Records were comprised of the masters of the game: Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, The Funky Four Plus One More, Spoonie Gee, The Treacherous Three — all were necessary elements of the label. Sugar Hill ran

the gamut, from the ridiculous behavior of Waterbed

Kev's "All Night Long" to the serious insistence of the Furious Five's "The Message." Overall, Sugar Hill was one label that you could count on to get your party started right, especially if your party included "Break Dance - Electric Boogie" by the West Street Mob.

Another label from back in the day that recently got the digital nod is Tommy Boy Records. Tommy Boy started up in 1981, ostensibly as a way of capturing Afrika Bambaataa's legendary live DJ sessions in the Bronx. "Jazzy Sensation" ('81) was the first to get the ball rolling (and lives onto today, sampled by countless bands and featured prominently in the Beastie Boys' "Hey Ladies"). "Looking For A Perfect Beat" ('82) came in at a close second, giving Tommy Boy their now famous slogan, "it's working."

The third time's the charm, it seems, as Bambaataa's third release, "Planet Rock" ('83), crossed over into the alternative market and put Tommy Boy squarely on the map. Owing as much to Kraftwerk as to James Brown, "Planet Rock" was an electro-funk groove that caught the globe on fire.

While Tommy Boy continued to put out records (Force MDs, Club Nouveau), it wasn't until 1988 that they would once again conquer the market. In that year, they released the debut singles for both Stetsasonic and De La Soul, and there was no turning back. From that point forward, they were squarely in the Rap game. Digital Underground, Queen Latifah, Paris, Naughty By Nature, House of Pain and Coolio were all to follow in the decade to come, making Tommy Boy's star shine ever brighter.

Rather than put their history into chronological order (and sparing us a CD's worth of selections by Information Society as a result), Tommy Boy has chosen to take the cream of their crop and spread them out over the course of four discs. As an added bonus, they contacted some of today's top artists, offering them the chance to remix their choice of songs pulled from Tommy Boy's star-studded catalogue. The result is an intriguing collection indeed.

And speaking of intriguing, Island's rerelease of Eric B. and Rakim's debut album, *Paid In Full*, is certainly worth taking a look at. In 1986, Rap music was in serious need of repair. The "party" and "braggadocio" aspects of the genre were about to play themselves out, and threatened to take the whole style with them. Along came rapper extraordinaire Rakim, nephew of living legend Ruth Brown. Together with deejay, Eric B., they would take the nation by storm with "Eric B. is President." Rakim's rhythmical attack was unparalleled, and his grounding in the Nation of Islam gave his lyrics an intellectual edge that had yet to be addressed. The song became an instant classic, and was played literally all summer long. Eric B.'s tendency to scratch with sound effects records lent the records a very surreal quality that influence countless.

This followed with "I Know You Got Soul," a bold song that relied heavily on a James Brown-produced sample freely lifted from the Bobby Byrd single of the same name. While James and company were no strangers to sampling (the break in "Funky Drummer" had already been used to anchor a number of records), this brought his recognizable music unabashedly into the foreground, setting the stage for an all-out assault on the Godfather's back catalogue.

What is most commendable about this release is not the album itself, though it certainly is an important one, and is directly responsible for many of rap's brightest moments in the years that followed; rather, Island included a second CD of remixes from the record, many of which played as important a role as the originals. Rap has always made itself open to interpretation, and through remixing, even the most classic songs can be broken down and created anew. In the case of Coldcut's remix of "Paid in Full," for instance, their version is as equally important and influential as the original. Not only did it pave the

way for M/A/R/R/S's big hit, "Pump Up The Volume," it opened the pop market up for a decidedly global view, introducing us to Israeli legend Ofra Haza.

Now that rap music has proven itself to be more than some passing trend, it's nice to see "the old school" get such royal treatment. In its short history, Rap has influenced rock, pop, jazz and blues and has changed the way we think about music. Not too shabby, considering it all started with a bunch of kids on a street corner.

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ASK MR. SMARTY-PANTS



vcromag@aol.com

Hey, Mr.S.P.-

Why'd they invent the states of the U.S.A.? What purpose do they serve? Why not just be one big country? How did people determine where individual state's borders would be (aside from rivers, mountains, etc.)? I guess I'm asking how people got together to decide: "We will be a state, but not those guys over there. Put the border here?"

- B.M., Williamsburg

Before I answer the question, allow me to apologize for the sketchy nature of my response. A complete exploration of this subject would require several volumes and cover some 300 years.

The states were not "invented" as such. Most of the territories that eventually became the first states began as independent colonies or corporate land grants by European crown corporations.

Some of the best examples of the establishment of corporate and crown colonies in North America are the Massachusetts Bay Company, the Jamestown Colony and the grant to Lord Baltimore that later became the state of Maryland.

It should be noted that, despite revisionist ideals to the contrary, many of these original settlers actually bought territory from the natives who were camped out on the land at the time. This led to incidents such as the purchase of Manhattan Island by the Dutch for the rough equivalent of \$26 in beads and other trinkets.

[Regarding the bead story, we should also note that 1) the value of glass trade beads, particularly white trade beads, was vastly more

in the economies of the northeastern tribes than the modern valuation would suggest, 2) the Indians who sold Manhattan Island didn't actually live there and had no right to sell it to the Dutch in the first place, and 3) the Indians who did inhabit the land were so desperate for European goods that they actually encouraged the presence of the Dutch.]

As to the borders of the colonies, as you point out they were often determined largely by geographic boundaries such as rivers and mountains, but also by cultural boundaries that were established by how far they could extend the colony's sphere of influence.

Spheres of influence could be established by the level of trade and cultural relationships with native ethnic groups, or by the distance that one could extend military power. These methods of establishment were often interchangeable.

It was, to some extent, lack of military power that prevented Denmark, for example, from establishing a permanent settlement in New Jersey, where they had a colony in the 17th century. This lack of marshal power was exacerbated by the lack of the Danish court's commitment to a permanent presence in the New World.

Technically, the original boundaries of some of the colonies, Massachusetts for example, stretched from Boston to the Pacific Ocean, but of course that vast territory was never actually under the control of the Bay Colony. Even Cape Cod, which was part of the Plimouth Colony (yes that is the way they spelled it at the time) was not actually part of Massachusetts in the 1600's.

Because of the vagaries of European history, the desire of some European nations to concentrate their foreign adventurism elsewhere and the effect of British naval power in the Atlantic, after a number of wars and hundreds of skirmishes, England established effective hegemony in North America. Of course border conflicts did not end there.

Before the U.S. was a federal republic, we existed under Articles of Confederation which joined the states together as a loose gathering of autonomous entities. These autonomous states were in frequent conflict and sometimes had trade wars against one another, closing borders and refusing to use currency printed in neighboring territories.

Even after the establishment of the United States there were occasional border conflicts to establish control of land and trade routes.

It was the adoption of the Constitution and mechanisms for resolving internacine conflicts that helped to stabilize the form and nature of the states.

After the establishment of federalism, congress decided what land areas would be accepted into the country and what those states should look like. This, to some extent, explains why the western states are much more regular in outline and equivalent in size than the eastern states.

We will ignore, for now the influence of slavery and the Civil War.

Why are domestic ducks white while their wild counterparts are various colors?

- A.C., Northampton

The simple answer is diet. What birds eat has a great deal to do with their color and also their flavor when they are eaten.

This is why some birds, and other animals, are said to have a "gamy flavor."

As has been noted in other publications, the famous "pink" flamingo is not always pink. Most flamingos are, in fact, white; they just develop the pink plumage when exposed to certain kinds of food-stuffs.

The other answer is genetics. In some cases, when humans domesticate animals, we encourage certain subtle changes in the genetic make-up of the beasts.

Humans tend to breed animals based on the traits that we would like to see; huge meaty parts on food animals, for example, rather than what would be best for the animal if it were in the wild. And just look at what we have done to the dog.

It has always been hard for me to believe that toy poodles are actually descended from wolves, let alone something like the chihuahua.



Yo Quiro
Mr. Smarty
Pants!

Tuscan Glory Tuscan Prowess

Sean Holland

Tuscany is without doubt one of the most beautiful regions of the world. An ancient seat of Western civilization, the graceful Tuscan landscape of steeply rolling hills is studded with cypress and olive trees, the occasional stone farmhouse with red tile roof, and of course, vineyards. Wine is a fundamental part of the culture, and has been for well over 3000 years. After a long era of complacency in Chianti and other Tuscan wine areas, a renewed tradition of quality and innovation has developed, especially in the hills of Florence and Siena. The rocky hills between the Tiber and Arno Rivers can produce some of the highest quality wines in the world, but this is land that requires dedication and sacrifice.

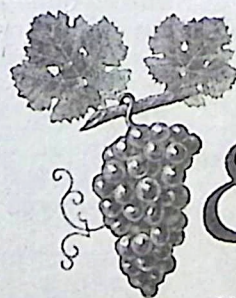
The extraordinary wines made from Sangiovese, a native Tuscan grape varietal, are probably the most remarkable of Etruscan legacies. Along with Sangiovese's clones of Brunello, Sangiovese, and Prugnolo Gentile, this noble varietal outclasses many wines made from the great abundance of other native Italian varietals. (Italy still grows an uncountable number of grape varietals, with more than a thousand vines recorded and, astonishingly, over four hundred officially permitted or recommended by various wine regions.) Abundantly and densely flavored, the Sangiovese-based wines of Chianti are most famous. The very name of this wine region produces images of squat wicker-covered bottles of cheap, dry red wine, but in Italian law, the name refers specifically to a delimited part of Tuscany stretching between Florence and Siena. Most commonly imported into the United States are Chianti Classicos,

which are higher in alcohol and acidity, and possess greater aging potential than regular Chianti. Also, widely imported is Chianti Rufina, which tends to be softer and more approachable when young. A "Riserva" Chianti, whether a Classico or a Rufina, must be aged for at least three years prior to release. Another lesser known Tuscan wine region surrounds a town just south and west of Chianti, called Scansano, where a wine known as Morellino di Scansano is produced. Also made of Sangiovese (locally called "Morellino," the name coming from the diminutive of morello, referring to the wine's blackish hue, even as most modern versions of this wine tend toward a glowing ruby color). This area makes highly appealing wines and Erik Banti is the most widely known producer in the region.

Recently attention has shifted to other great Tuscan wines, like Brunello di Montalcino, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, and especially the so-called "Super Tuscans," those wines in which Sangiovese usually predominates and often is blended with Cabernet Sauvignon and/or Merlot. "Super Tuscans" do not conform to local official viticultural regulations and are therefore designated simple vino da tavola, or "table wines." However, they really are often super wines, rich, powerful, and extraordinarily harmonious. The art of making these wines is engaged by an ever-growing group of individuals. Producers such as Antinori with their "Tignanello" and the iconoclastic Monte Vertine, who produced the region's first pure Sangiovese in oak barriques, called "Le Pergole Torte" in 1977, have led the way. Further success is likely as the wine's of Tuscany grown more renowned and the rewards of the high standards set by producers such as these become obvious to their neighbors. Enjoy exploring.

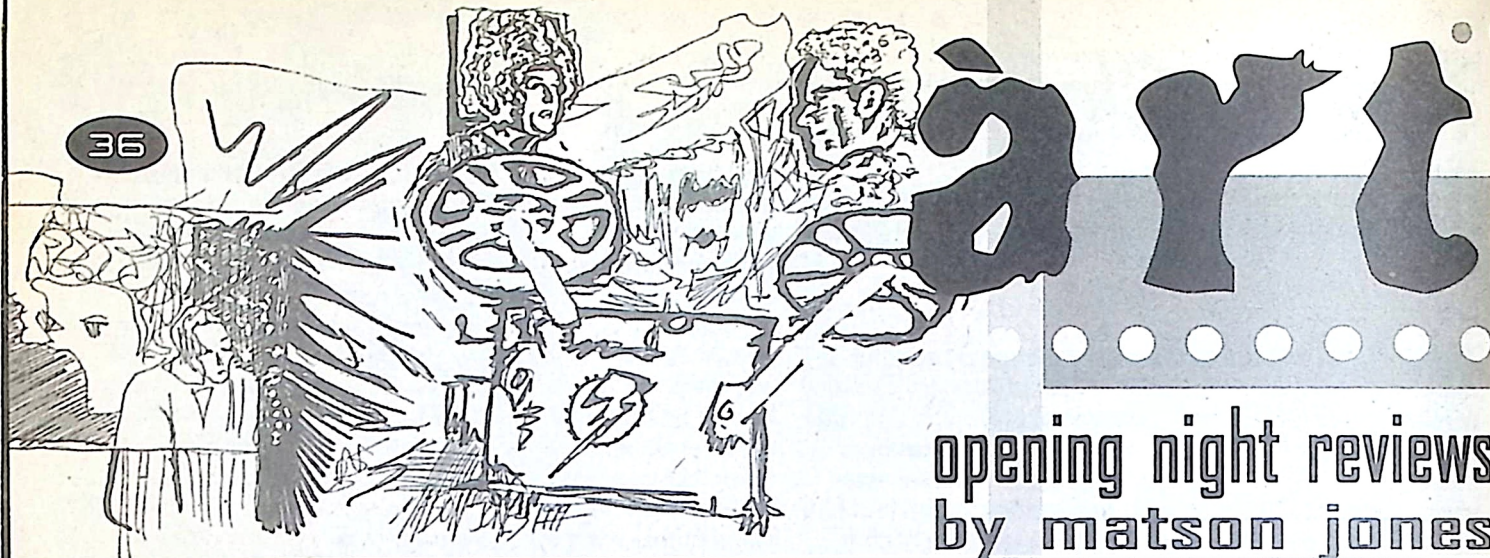
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opening night reviews by matson jones

DEC 11, 9:30 -11:30 PM
World War II Club, Northampton
Dadavision Live

I went, like so many other fans and friends, to the Dadavision Live show at the World War II Club. It was billed as a "spectacle of excess and introspection." It had been at least fifteen years since the last time I had been to a Dadavision show. In this long anticipated performance they once again blended a twisted brand of humor with random films and trance-inducing music. The production was at times monotonous, perhaps deliberately so, with long sections of projected films interspersed with random lighting effects, dancers, and comedic outbursts.

Alan Arenius, formerly of NYC's Living Theater, sparkled in several performances. In one he brought forth a poetic melancholy as a modern day clown. His impersonation of Columbo was masterful, especially when he engaged in a little Q & A with an unsuspecting member of the audience.

Gene Kane brought jolts of energy to the production. His comedic timing was remarkable and his characterizations were fun to watch. They included a politician who transformed into a werewolf, an "army shell shocked type" proudly telling how his nephew stabbed him through the eye socket with a bayonet he had given to him for his third birthday, and a woman who recounts the tale of her husband, a hunter, who applied too much musk on his person in order

to attract a deer. The problem (and the punch line) being that her husband is Humpty Dumpty. At this point a macabre Humpty Dumpty puppet appeared on a wall on the stage and was promptly pummeled to death by a deer (Arenius).

Eric Pierce, one of the Dadavision founders, made a cameo appearance in which he played an actual tape of a dream he had recorded a quarter century earlier.

This production was the vision of Dana Gentes, who introduced the show with a "Nowism" routine where he took Polaroids of the audience. He also ran the elaborate projecting and lighting equipment. Tom Mahnken (Trailer Park) ran audio. (Gentes and Mahnken recently collaborated on a live 48 hour radio broadcast in Europe.) Two postmodern dancers (Shoshannah Wineburg and Carolyn Eckert) appeared sporadically throughout the show in black and white makeup with platinum blonde wigs and elaborate costumes. Their appearances kept the show alive and flowing. To me Dadavision is the Variety Theater prophesized by Futurist Filippo Tomasso Marinetti in 1913. In the house: Bode, Raymond & The Circle, Councilor Bill, Amiee, Stiv, Tobey, Noelle, Coolo, Chris G, The Duchess and Renrut, among others.

DEC 17, 5-7 PM
Hart Gallery, Northampton
Charles Malzenski

The Hart Gallery possesses some interesting energy.

Unfortunately that energy overshadowed this opening. Let me explain. The gallery space is nicely crafted & well lit, with ample wall space. Unfortunately one of the walls has a large entranceway looking out at people shopping for art supplies. I tried to think of it as Pop Art, which helped. Still, the retail activity was just distracting enough to take away from the opening reception, which in this case featured some splendid acrylics by Charles Malzenski. My favorites were the landscapes of a Pioneer Valley without people. Wide vistas of lush forests on our beloved Holyoke Range rolling down to the curving Connecticut River and Oxbow. Only forest and river, with no fields or roads. I was instantly transported into the scene imagining myself a bird flying over the vista 3000 years before Christ. Below me wild virgin forests, every centimeter teeming with life that we can only barely understand or imagine today.

DEC 18, 6-8 PM
Cafe Beyond, Brattleboro VT
Brian D. Cohen, Etchings

The Cafe Beyond Gallery is in a cafe in the back of a hip bookstore down a Brattleboro side street. All that was missing were sullen musicians blowing cool fifties jazz. Brian Cohen was exhibiting an assortment of selected etchings. My initial reaction was mixed because while they were technically well executed, the content was a little sparse. I have, however, in the past few weeks, grown quite fond of a post-

card reproduction of one of the etchings (Catboat). Perhaps Cohen's is the type of art of that grows on you.

JAN 2, 2-4 PM

Forbes Library, Northampton

***Jonathon Gottsche,
Nature Photography:
Air, Water & Earth***

Gottsche is a nature photographer and natural history/field trip guide for Mass. Audubon. The show was comprised of his observations of human impact on the natural world. It was separated into three areas: Air, Water and Earth.

The Air portion included photographs of a northern harrier nest, a killdeer nest, and other birds that are under constant threat from human activities. The primary cause of this in the post-DDT age is habitat destruction. As populations increase areas which are now protected or are still untouched will inevitably be destroyed to make way for people.

The Water portion demonstrated another example of this with photographs of harbor and gray seals on Cape Cod. Until as recently as 1963 the Commonwealth had put a bounty on their heads due to the assumption that seals were responsible for the dwindling commercial fish supply. Now that the population has reestablished itself, the seals find that they have to share the beaches where they sun themselves with humans wishing to do the same. One photo stood out in particular. It depicted a plastic toy throwing ring stuck around the neck of a seal! Nobody would expect such a benign child's toy to become an environmental hazard.

The Earth section of the exhibit focused on landfills. It showed that even the most seemingly benign waste products can still break down and wreak havoc on the ecosystem. Margarine, for example, decomposes into a chemical that eats through the barriers that are used to keep landfills in place.

Congratulations are in order to Mr. Gottsche for this educational exhibit which undertakes one of the most crucial issues in our lives today -- raising the awareness

level in the average citizen to the larger issues of an environment which we the people are not separate from, but dependant upon. The photographs were of the highest quality in composition and color due in part to Mr. Gottsche's uncompromising eye and technical proficiency.

JAN 8, 5-7 PM

Pahana Gallery, Northampton

***Denise Beaudet,
Bessie, The Blues
& Other People***

This was the night of one of the big snow/ice storms, but still a bunch of people showed up. The exhibit kicked off Pahana's sixth year of monthly openings. It featured pen & ink works with water-color and acrylics that depicted a variety of scenes -- mainly of jazz musicians and skeletons, in "Mexican Day of the Dead" motifs. The art was colorful, playful and fun to look at. Many of them were set up almost comic book style with a few panels. My favorite showed two versions of the same guitarist. In one of them he was "normal", but in the other he was a skeleton. The buffet was simply unbelievable with many types of chocolate cakes and pies and tortes. Pahana continues to have the most dynamic and progressive art openings of any gallery in the valley.

JAN 9, 2:30-4:30 PM

Forbes Library, Northampton

***Marci Rossi Wise
(Oil Paintings
& Mixed Media)***

The colors and peaceful subject matter of the oil paintings were inviting to the casual viewer. Sadly, to me, these color schemes and applications were recognizable as products of the Art Institute of Boston machine. In her works on paper Rossi chose to represent an idea (as told in her statement) of the resurrection of the female principles in our society (the Goddess as principle Deity and awareness of the good Mother Earth). I found it interesting that these particular works were done in the style of Picasso, one of the most chauvinist pigs of our time (a quality for which

he is as well known as his art). A clever juxtaposition if this is meant to represent the sort of partnership of male and female through the resurrection of female principles. It was unclear if this was the conscious intent. Along with Rossi and her friends I had a wonderful time.

JAN 10, 1-3 PM

Hillyer Gallery, Smith College

Refrigerator Door

This opening consisted entirely of children's art. Being that it was at Smith College it had a Big Time art opening air to it. This made it a lot of fun for the kids involved. The walls of the Hillyer Gallery were jammed full with art. It was a spectacular vision to behold, reminding me of my days in elementary school. One year our art program was run by an old lady who showed up once a week with a shopping cart filled with yarn, glue, construction paper, poster paint, scissors, crayons and glitter. We'd do all the things every other kid in America did: trace the outline of our hand & add a few lines to make a turkey, fold paper in a certain way & then cut it to make a snowflake, make rubbings of leaves, and glue yarn to construction paper. I still remember how that glue smelled and how it seemed like that lady had the best job in the world.

JAN 10, 2-4 PM

Grubbs Gallery, Williston

Northampton School, Easthampton

***Stephen Petegorsky,
Photographs***

This was Petegorsky's third opening in eight days. This one consisted of Polaroid "emulsions" on gold leaf and clay. They looked like mini-Warhol oxidation paintings with fuzzy black images screened on top of them. Each one had a different image: a baby, a flamingo, a seahorse, another baby, a robin... you get the idea. Most of the images were blurry and not too detailed. Overall I wasn't too impressed by it even though I wanted to be.

When you have a show based on a single idea or technique, you better make sure it's a damn

good idea. In this case, Polaroid emulsions on gold leaf weren't that exciting. I remember seeing some Polaroid transfers at a show in Boston a few years back when they were kind of trendy. They were of an old building in Cuba. That they were photos of Cuba was supposed to make them more desirable. All I saw in them was a crappy old building. Sometimes you can get a Polaroid transfer to look interesting, but in general they're very small and not too thrilling unless they're erotic in nature. Once "the show was read," which in this case took about two minutes, I hung out searching for something deeper within it -- subject matter, intent, statement. In the end all I found were fuzzy black pictures of common objects on gold leaf and clay.

As promised last issue, I will now take a closer look at the Art Kiosk on Main Street in Northampton.

When you walk past it on the sidewalk all you can see are two big steel slabs with a triangle roof. It doesn't look like they finished building it yet. The steel bench next to it is uncomfortable to sit on. It's too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. The Kiosk should simply be a big bulletin board where you could put up a flyer to announce your arts event. That way everybody would have an equal chance to let people know what they're doing. And if you felt like going to an opening you would know that the Art Kiosk would be the place to see what was happening.

It would kind of be like the window at Raymond Insurance Agency on Lower Main. They always have flyers of art events, openings, and concerts in their window. I always feel up to date walking past there. That's what the Art Kiosk should be, not a confessional style booth that you have to walk inside of just to see an art listing. Forget about putting a flyer on the structure. They are routinely ripped off each morning around 6:45 by a mysterious gentleman who walks the length of Main Street removing each and every poster he can find.

As it stands now, there is, locked under glass within the Kiosk, a two-month list of "art events." This list is "sponsored by the *Hampshire Gazette*." Most of these "art events" are things you have to pay to do, like taking Tango Lessons at the Center for the Arts.

There is also a map of the downtown Northampton area with various "arts and performance spaces" highlighted in red. These include: 10 halls at Smith College, the two movie

houses in town, The Words & Pictures Museum, The Arts & Industry Building, Hotel Northampton, 25 Main Street, and Iron Horse/Pearl Street/Calvin. There was, oddly enough, no listing on the map of any of the other locations which John Villani thought important enough to include in his recent book *The 100 Best Small Art Towns In America* (in which he listed Northampton as #1). As a work of graphic design, though, the map was interesting to look at.

A few years back there was a competition to design the Kiosk. The competition was sponsored by the Northampton Arts Council -- the city's official government art group. So, what better way to find out more about the Art Kiosk than going "on-line" to access the World Wide Web? I found the Northampton Arts Council homepage at www.gazettenet.com/hamp-arts/index.html. (Disclaimer: I last looked at this web page on January 29th. By the time you read this, hopefully the powers that be have updated the site. If so: It's about time! If not: Get with it!)

Sure enough the first thing I saw on my screen was a picture of the art kiosk. They call it the "Art Pavilion." It wasn't a photo of the real kiosk, but a rendition of it that kind of looked like it was made of plastic toy blocks. There was text underneath the image suggesting I "click on kiosk model for calendar." I clicked. A page appeared listing some art events -- for December 1998! I guess the Y2K bug has already struck here in Noho.

I went back to the home page to see if I could get any more info about the Kiosk. There I found a link to "Public Art." It brought up a screen of four examples of public art in Northampton:

1) A Mural Made of Tiles at the JFK School by Patricia Fay, the Chair of the Art Department at the Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA. The last time I checked there was nothing public about a middle school. It's not like you can just waltz in off the street to check out a mural if you don't have kids that go there. I'm quite sure that if someone showed up searching for some "hand-painted bisque fired tiles... of species chosen to suggest complex links between land and sea" the police would promptly be notified.

2) Another Mural at the JFK School. This one is by Lynn Peterfreund of Leverett. It's in the cafeteria. It features full body portraits of teenagers cut up in sections and then reassembled differently. I don't understand why they keep giving artists from outside of Northampton commissions to do art at

JFK School. Why don't they just have the students create the art? After seeing the Refrigerator Door show I'm convinced they could do a great job.

3) The "Railroad Trestle." This was designed by Lucy Baird Menoucek of Northampton. It's also known as the weird metal sculpture that keeps getting hit by trucks. Be warned, an ordinance was recently passed to raise the fine of crashing into it with a truck from \$20 to \$500 to help pay the cost of repairing it. That is excessive. If a truck driver hits the thing it's probably because he was distracted by the monstrosity in the first place.

4) The Art Kiosk!

For those of you without the time, here is the complete text from the Northampton Arts Council web page www.gazettenet.com/hamp-arts/public_art/PAKIO.html describing the Art Kiosk (as seen on Jan 29, 1999):

"The Public Art Committee and the Board of the Northampton Arts Council is pleased to announce that it has chosen the work of sculptor Gene Montez Flores for two public art projects for downtown Northampton. Gene Flores will design and build both an arts and information kiosk and a bench for the new mini-plaza the Arts Council is creating on Main Street, on a portion of land in front of First Churches and Fleet Bank. Both pieces will be fabricated from stainless steel, with a satin hand-polished finish.

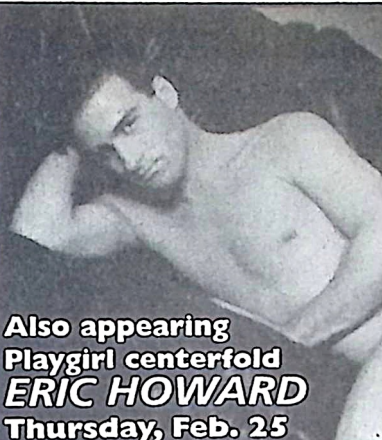
"Originally from California, Gene Flores lived and worked in New York City for a number of years before moving eight years ago to Plainfield, MA, where he and his wife live and where he maintains his studio. His sculptures have been exhibited widely throughout the United States as well as in Sweden, Germany and Poland. Most recently he has been working on an installation, the "Love's Seat Project" for Battery Park in New York City. Also this year, his work, "Pavillon Papillon" (Butterfly Pavilion), was chosen for inclusion in the Socrates Sculpture Park Tenth Anniversary Exhibition in Queens, NY."

Since the kiosk is already built how about posting some photos of the completed project? Why not a little up-to-date commentary on how it has been utilized so far? We've got to keep on top of these things now that we're the #1 small art town in America. Speaking of which, the mayor of Northampton, Mary Ford, in her January 21 State of the City speech, said "The coup of 1998 was being named Best Small Art City in the nation." The real coup was that a guy who writes for those magazines you find only on airlines got us to believe it was true. Yep, right here in River City.



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THAT PART OF YOU

Half-dumb with expectation
I want to touch that part of you
That wanders the strip for peep shows,
That spies the blonde, brunette,
The redhead, all the same girl
With different wigs, outfits.
As a blonde I am soft,
Wear gingham and turquoise
Sometimes cowgirl clothes.
Come from farm country, the Tornado Belt,
Used to finding shelter.

As a brunette I am hard-boiled
With a severe smile,
Manhattan born & bred.
My diamonds are bright
As the winking signs in Times Square.
I make you work for my kisses.

As a redhead I am gingerbread,
Spicy with the smell of home.
I come from a small town in the South of France.
Worked as an erotic dancer



At a place called La Rouge.
They say once you've stripped
It stays in your blood.

I want to touch that part of you
Where desire makes you hard,
Makes you crash head on like a bird
Who sees the reflection of the sky
In a bare window.

HOURLASS

*I am not the hourglass
Bleach-blond
Perched on the ledge
Of a 5th Avenue hotel.
She's been dialing men
For hours, drinking
Spanish wine
And smoking cherry cigars.
She's been writing her diary
On hotel stationary.
She's been eating like a bird.*

*I am not the lipsticked lover
With moonlight eyeshadow
And false lashes.
She's been bleeding stars,
Delivering pretty words
To blind men and Jesus.
She's spent years
Trying to maintain a balance
Between virgin and whore.*

*I am not the hourglass
Bleach-blond.*



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good reads

Outrageous

by the editors of US Magazine
St. Martin's Press
\$29.95

US Magazine has always been a favorite of mine because of, well, the pictures! **Outrageous** takes the best of the best from the recent past and throws 'em all together in one big (and I mean LARGE) book. And hey, variety is the spice of life, right? This book has everybody from Jennifer Aniston to Morgan Freeman to Anne Heche, and all the stars in between.

My picks for best pics? Well, both go to Drews: Drew Barrymore is not only perfect, but downright beautiful as a butterfly, while Drew Carey never looked better in a little red bathrobe and cowboy boots.

—Aundria Theocles

House of the Winds

by Mia Yun
Interlink Books
\$22.95

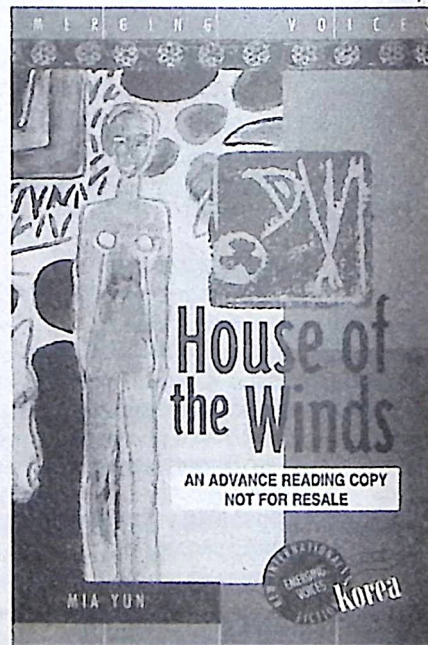
Interlink Publishing group is based in Northampton. One of their imprints publishes an "emerging voices international fiction series" called INTERLINK BOOKS. Mia Yun's first novel *House of the Winds* is part of that series.

This novel tells the story of a childhood in post-Korean War Seoul. It opens with a moment and image taken from the author's own childhood: "I was standing with my mother in the middle of the sunny cabbage patch behind our little house in Seoul.... It is a sunny afternoon. The sunlight is so phosphorous - it's like fine gold powder let loose from a bottle - I can almost grab it.... A child stands in a sparkling, sun-soaked world her mother created behind their small, wooden baby blue gate.... a bright and dreamy world of flowers, starched clothes, waxed floors and made up stories."

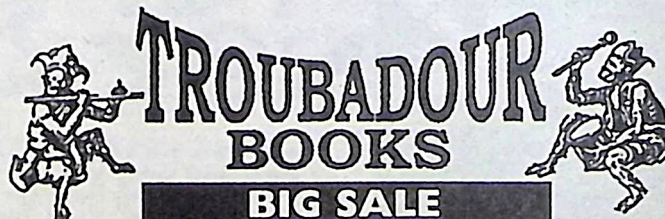
As in the author's own life, behind this gate is the security and innocence of childhood. It is here that the fictitious world of the novel begins. The narrator's family is abandoned by their father, and her mother must then struggle to support them. They move to increasingly smaller houses in less desirable neighborhoods, more and more exposed to the world around them.

That world comes to us as it comes to our narrator: as stories, fables and tales, gossip and conjecture. Above all they are women's stories which constitute this girl's passage through childhood. They are her education, and were for me as well.

—Marie Waechter



Christina Ricci
from *Outrageous*



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Lord in Hawaii 5-0 (holy fools)?

Troubadour
Books, not a
bookstore, but
a force of
nature

For Kings and Planets

by Ethan Canin
Random House
\$24.95

Ethan Canin's new book is a coming of age novel. A young man from the midwest, Orno Tarcher, goes to New York to seek his way. He leaves the small farming town in which he has been raised and goes to college, taking with him his family's support and expectations - that if he works hard he will succeed in getting into medical school.

Once he gets there he meets a brilliant and socially dominant student, Marshall Emerson, who befriends our hayseed and takes him under wing; he is a loose wire, potentially self-destructive yet so brilliant and creative that the rules for academic success to him do not apply. It is through this friendship that our young man comes to know himself.

At first I thought this book read like those fat moralistic tales common in the decades after World War II in which merit and character win out. (Unlike them, our hero is no hero: He's an average, unambitious student, seemingly at peace with the stability and respectability his accepted path will provide him with.)

Instead the book began to feel Victorian to me. I was left with the impression that he might actually harbour a sense of smugness. Orno appears to thrive as Marshall's early promise fails to shine. Marshall becomes estranged from his family, and Orno inserts himself into this family's affections and marries his sister.

In the end this is a novel of the nineties. Ethan Canin has managed to write a long book with the same focus as one of his short stories. This is what all of us novel fans hope for.

- Marie Waechter



*What is alive, and open,
and active, is good.*

*All that makes for inertia, lifelessness,
dreariness, is bad.*

This is the essence of morality.

- D.H. Lawrence

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COMIC BOOKS

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It's about sex

and where to get it, and what you want and where you find it. Some of it's good; some of it's not; good sex being that when all partners are happy.

And, if you're a comic book character, is sex part of your life at all?

This col is about good sex comic books. In all cases, the titles reviewed herein are listed because of their particularly high quality of writing and graphics art, as well as for their street-life subject matter.

Many of these comics can be found at, or obtained through, your local comic book retailer. Sadly, many retailers are slow to special-order, and if this should prove true for you, please write directly to the creators/publishers listed below.

XXxenophile.

written and drawn by Phil Foglio (latter issues by "various"), is 99% perfect: a word or several about birth control, over-population, and prevention of disease would make any issue a perfect collection of short, "profusely illustrated" stories in which no one is hurt or abused, and nearly everyone is drawn noticeably naked. All participating beings—regular human types, and sentient non-humans, dryads, were-beasts, wizards, and what not—are happy to be there, and sexual sharing as fun, tender, and caring excitement is their reason to be there. Certainly outrageous,

pleasurably outrageous; often funny, sometimes tender, beautifully drawn comics from Palliard Press, 912 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408.

Strips is a story of on-campus intertwining lives and lovers, set back in a time of pre-AIDS innocence. Drawn with a remarkably simple, clean line and told with speakable, clear dialogue from sympathetic characters, STRIPS unfolds their lives through their most sexual, and intimate, moments. From writer/artist Chuck Austen, at Rip Off Press, POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604 / www.ripoff-press.com/index.htm.

Howard Cruse's **Barefootz** likewise chronicles the lives of friends, with more societal awareness, as several characters are gays living with society's straight majority. Cruse's is a cartoony style, but his ear for dialogue and the relationships he develops give his characters all the dignity of any "more seriously-drawn" actors. Written and drawn by Cruse, available from Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, or Howard Cruse via www.skyhouse.org/howard/comics/html.

Empty Love Stories is not about sex: Steve Darnall's dark, sardonic, short tales of the effects of sex, and love, too much/not enough of either, often take the form of "True Romance Meets Mondo Cane." Darnall's

wacky, sharply-honed wit, illustrated by several artists each issue, while never unpleasant, is always bizarre. From Funny Valentine Press, POB 578155, Chicago, IL 60657-8155.

Two responsible comics publications about sex originally appeared for free: **Death Talks About Life** features Death as an attractive young woman, a character in the SANDMAN comics series, talking about AIDS, and AIDS prevention. The 8-page, black and white handout, written by Neil Gaiman and drawn by Dave McKean, deals matter-of-factly, but hip-ly, with how one can get, and how one can avoid, contact with the HIV virus. Published by DC comics, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, NY NY 10019.

Antartic Press published a similar, 16-page color handout concerning itself with sexually transmitted diseases, naming names and symptoms, and cures available. More illustrated lecture than Death's casual chat, **Ninja High School Talks About STDs** nonetheless is informative and non-inflammatory. Written by Dr. Joeming Dunn, and illustrated and dialogued by NHS's Ben Dunn, it conveys the necessary messages at a middle-school to high school level. From Antartic Press, 7272 Wurzbach #204, San Antonio, TX 78240 / antartic-press.com.

For those who seek it, one small publisher specializes:

Eros Comics, a division of Fantagraphics Books, where one can find Wymyn's comix, and men's comix: something to shock and disgust probably everyone, and something, likely, to please everyone, too. For a free adults-only catalogue, write to Eros Comix, POB 25070, Seattle, WA 98125 / eroscomix.com.

A lot of comix-sex is coming from Japan: **Hentai**, a genre of manga (Japanese comics) devoted to sexual titillation. It includes wide-eyed characters, super-realistic lines, and super non-realistic stories, with subject matter that ranges from prostitutes with guns to demonic domination to more simple incest and college sexual hijinks. What isn't "precious" or "vicious" tends to be silly; better titles including *OGANKI CLINIC*, *TABOO*, and *BONDAGE FAIRIES* (the Tinkerbell-type, protectors—and seducers—of various garden insects and life-forms). Most are available through Studio Proteus, and Eros Comics.

The lives of two exotic dancers are chronicled in the semi-biographical **MELODY** by Jacques

life of a young Canadian woman who takes a job dancing for men. A rough-line style of art and some

unpleasant characters make this sometimes hard reading, but *Melody* herself is both pleasant and strong-willed, and the story reads realistically. Currently, *MELODY* is out of print, but worth seeking out at comic stores.

Omaha the Cat Dancer takes its large cast of characters through dirty city politics, and through fidelities and infidelities—sexual, philosophical, and political. Thoughtful dialogue and thought-through scripting create real people from "funny animals" art; heir to *FRITZ THE CAT*, but more truly "adult" in *OMAHA's* concerns and relationships than *FRITZ* ever meant to be; recently, formerly from



DEATH TALKS ABOUT LIFE



Bovoin, and in *OMAHA*, by Reed Waller and Kate Worley. **Melody** is a very straightforward account of the changes in the

Kitchen Sink Press, Northampton, with collected editions available through the Words & Pictures Museum store.

SWEET BABY'S

It's maple sugaring time, that late February through early April old New England tradition that makes the cold of winter worthwhile in western Massachusetts, southern Vermont and New Hampshire — **VMag** territory. In January or February, when daytime temperatures rise above 40 degrees and the nights are still freezing, maple farmers take to the woods with buckets, tubing and drills to gather sap from sugar maple trees (*acer saccharum*). The collected sap is boiled down to pure maple syrup.

Just as it seems that winter will never end, sugaring begins. Sweet steam from the boiling syrup comes forth from sugar houses dotting the hill towns. The chilly air outside is a marked contrast to the warmth of the wood or oil-fired evaporator inside the weathered sugar shack. The aroma of hot syrup evokes a craving for pancakes with maple syrup, sugar on snow, or sweet maple candy.

There are many sugar houses as you travel the towns surrounding Interstate 91 from Massachusetts to Vermont and then east to New Hampshire. Many are open to the public (mostly on weekends). The ones we have selected serve pancakes or sugar on snow. Some of these houses do an outstanding job of showing the sugaring process. In our visits, we found the maple farmers to be very friendly and informative while doing a tough physical task of boiling down an almost clear slightly sweet sap into a wonderfully sweet amber syrup. It is suggested that you call ahead to make sure the sugar house you want to visit is boiling that day. Be sure to dress warmly and expect to walk through mud to get a good idea of what really goes into that little jug of syrup.

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guide to maple
sugaring time

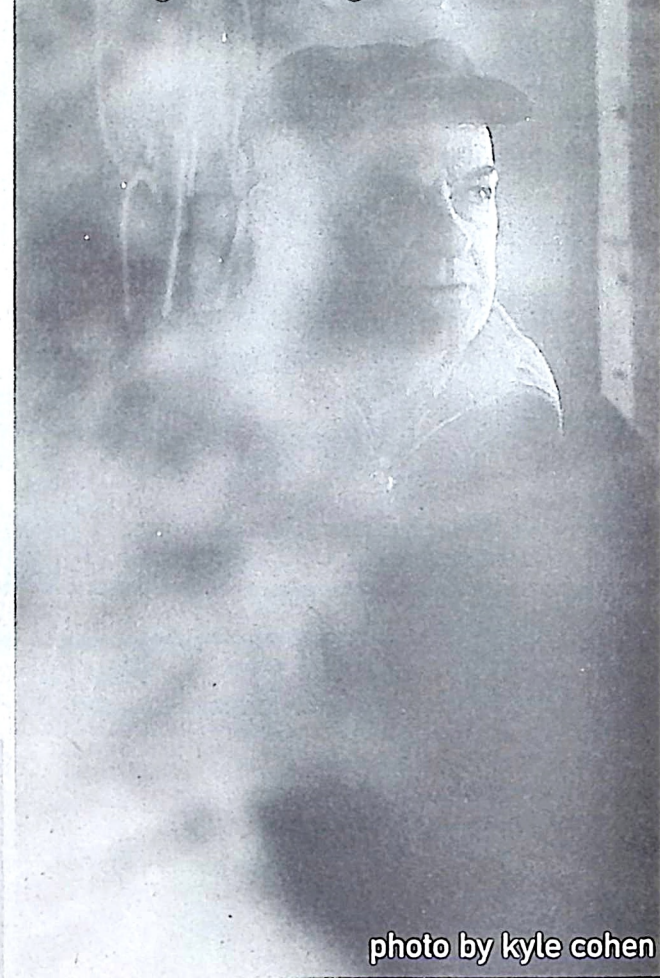


photo by kyle cohen

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WINDY HILL SUGAR HOUSE

Sam Hill Road, Worthington MA
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For more information: www.state.vt.us/agric/sugarhouses.htm for Vermont Maple Sugar Houses. Additional information about sugaring and the sugaring season is available from the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association, Watson-Spruce Corner Road, Ashfield MA 01330 / 413.628.3912 / www.massmaple.org.



teopaeoa*



CONTEST

Correctly identify 1) the local spot pictured at left and 2) tell us what's wrong with the picture, and win a chance for the following prizes: 1st prize - a brand new ZIP DISC from Yes Computers!; 2nd and 3rd prizes - wild Brain Samba t-shirts from Good Idea, Inc.! Deadline for entries is March 15. Winners will be chosen randomly from all correct entries. Mail to: VMag Contest, POB 774, Northampton MA 01061, or E-mail us at vcromag@aol.com (teopaeoa created by mr peter laird)

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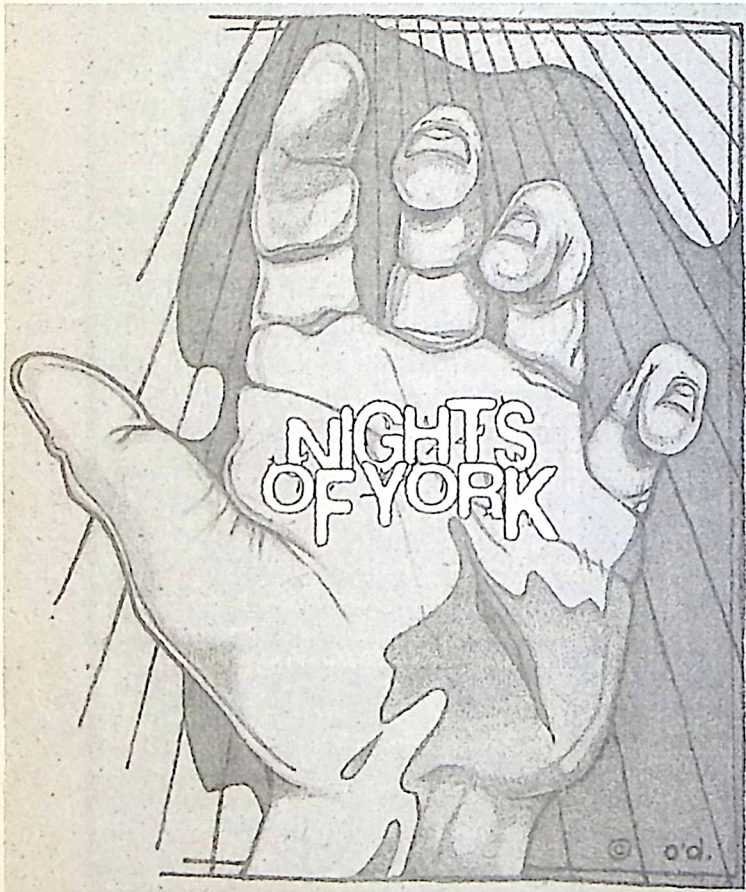
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america • bird house • split

joseph a. citro's new england odditorium

dave o'donnell illustration



Every year, as part of my work, I make several pilgrimages to allegedly haunted houses. Sometimes I merely conduct interviews. Sometimes I spend the night.

Recently, during a book promotional tour, I found myself in North Stonington, Connecticut. The town is located in an especially haunted part of the state. It's near Ledyard, where Jemima Wilkinson returned from the dead. And it's close to Jewett City, where colonial vampires staked out a place in New England ghostlore.

This beautiful rural area appears much as it did two hundred years ago. Luckily, during my visit the autumn foliage was at its picturesque peak. But it remained to be seen if my luck would hold up: I planned to spend the night at the John York house, a bed and breakfast believed

to have at least one invisible occupant.

The house, a Revolutionary War era post and beam, was constructed around 1741. John York, its builder, ran it as a tavern on the busy post road between Providence and New London.

Supposedly George Washington slept there.

While that may not be true, other stories seem more firmly rooted in fact.

Historical papers discuss deaths in the house. A drunken traveler allegedly fell down the steep staircase and broke his neck. Two Revolutionary era soldiers - best friends - fought each other in the tavern. One stabbed the other to death.

Afterwards - so the story goes - it was

impossible to remove his blood from the wide wooden floor planks. Since the stains couldn't be cleaned or disguised, the only solution was to tear up the floorboards and put them back upside down.

During the 1960's and 70's owners Hugo and Mariam Wilms documented all sorts of ghostly shenanigans: heavy footsteps on empty stairs, falling furniture, a levitating mattress, and moving pictures - the kind that mysteriously change position on the walls.

Especially vexing was the heavy brass barometer that repeatedly unbolted itself from the wall and flew across the room, landing on the floor without breaking. Things got so chaotic the couple hired professional ghostbusters who banished the haunt from the premises.

The house sat empty for a

few years until December 1996 when two young biologists, Leea and David Grote, bought it. They planned to open a bed and breakfast. During their application hearing a zoning commissioner gave them their first clue the place might be haunted. He asked what they intended to do about the "ghost issue." Well, as scientists, they weren't too concerned. They were more interested in accurate historical restoration.

When I checked into the allegedly haunted house, the first thing I asked my hosts was whether they had experienced any indication of ghostly activity. They cautiously admitted to a couple of occurrences that were... ambiguous. Leea said she clearly heard someone repeatedly calling her name from the bottom of the stairs. But there have been no flying barometers or levitating mattresses.

If exorcists actually banned the ghost from the house, it is no surprise that the most frightening episode took place in the yard. A sealed window in the back of a guest's van exploded outward, blasting shards of glass in a five foot semi-circle around the vehicle.

The van's other windows were already open, so the explosion wasn't the consequence of heat and pressure. It seemed to be a defective window... or... perhaps... the work of ghosts.

Anyway, with these strange stories swimming in my head, I climbed the steep, cramped stairway to my bedroom. Sleep came slowly, I must admit. But when I slept, I slept well.

All in all, my experience at the John York House was comfortable and without incident. The ghosts, so it would seem, were every bit as hospitable as the landlords.

But still I feel a little worried. I can't help but wonder if I am getting a bad name in the spirit world. I am always eager to visit ghosts, but no matter how I approach them, they always seem to avoid me.

Raoul Flaherty's Page

4 O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon a woman stood at the bus stop in front of Claude's Tire and Lube accompanied by her cleavage. Claude's two gearheads, Junior and Tip, accompanied by their partial erections, stopped working on the cancerous Ford they had up on the lift, grabbed two Cokes from Claude's cooler and sat down on the grimy green couch by the overhead door to observe. She craned her neck down the glass-infested street and her breasts seemed to crane with her, hoping to catch a glimpse of the Sky Avenue bus on the sweltering horizon. Her mouth spat out an appropriate word that caused Tip to snicker and Junior to snort. Then she glanced at the watch that strangled her wrist and her heavily-applied eyelashes hovered like tarantulas as her bitten-down fingernailed hands rummaged through her pocketbook for smokes.

"Can I offer you a light?" asked a sideburned young man accompanied by a prophylactic. His faded blue work shirt was untucked and unbuttoned and his sudden appearance convinced the two mechanics to remove their bulging eyes from the woman's charismatic buttocks - which seemed to them to be devouring her skin-tight leopard-skin pedal pushers from the inside out - and got back to work.

The woman, summoning all the shoulders, hips, elbows and sleepy-eyed detachment required to execute a shrug, shrugged, "Why the hell not?" And her full lips drew slowly from the small dancing flame, aware that the flame had already consumed most of the young man's match and had begun browning the thumb and third knuckle of the young man's dark and calloused hand.

"You live around here?" he drawled, in his deeply cavernous voice, lighting his own cigarette as the match continued to sear him.

The woman and her suspicious eyebrow gave the sideburned one the once-over and replied with an exhale, "No. I was supposed to meet a friend here, but she and her ridiculous nose job stood me up, as she is prone to do, and now me and my fanny find ourselves stuck in the middle of Southeast Douche at 4 o'clock in the afternoon talking to a bulge in someone's jeans."

"Look," said the dark-complected promise of sweaty sin and intercourse, "I got a truck out back. What say you and I and this and those make our way around the corner and I'll take you anywhere you wanna go."

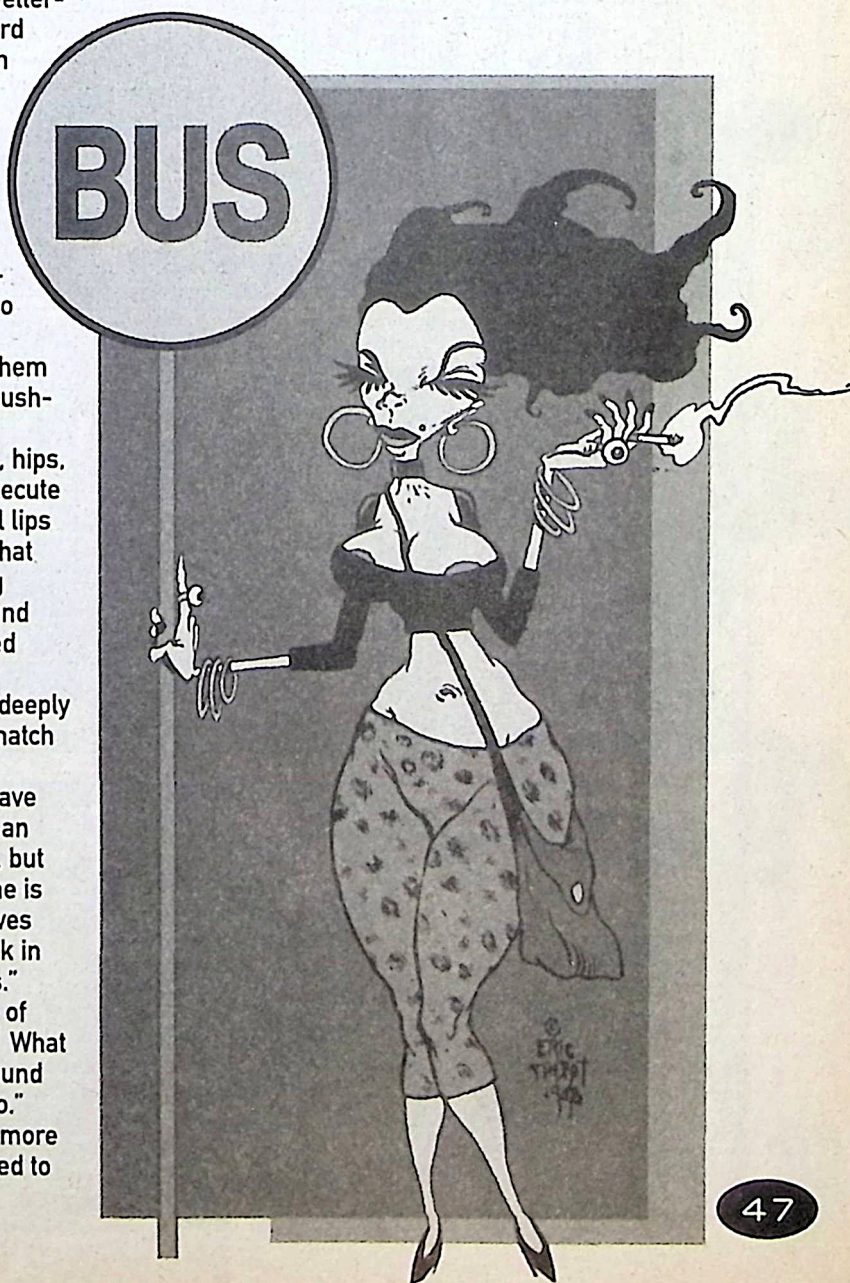
"Pound sand," her conscience (which was more than content to wait for public transportation) wanted to say.

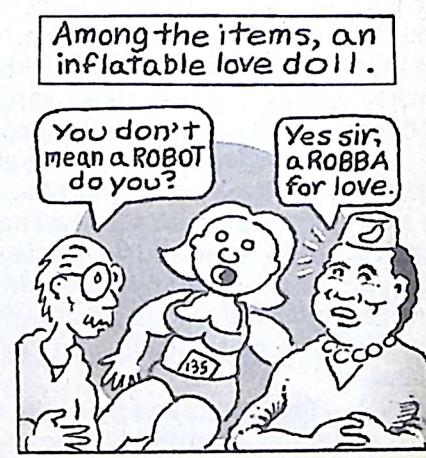
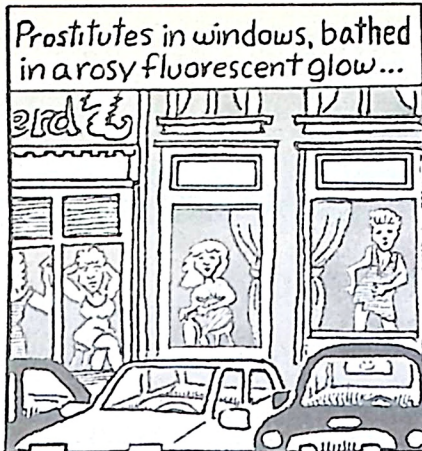
"Get yourself a cushion," her self esteem (which had endured the likes of an abusive stepfather and two philandering husbands) wished to assert.

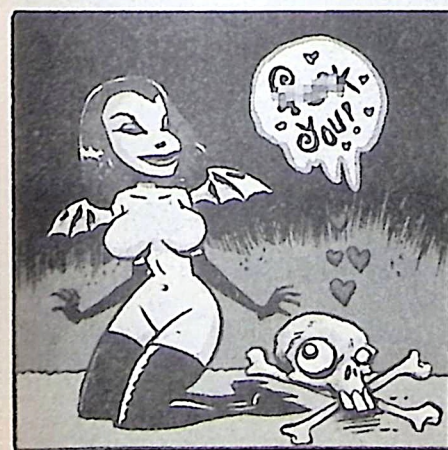
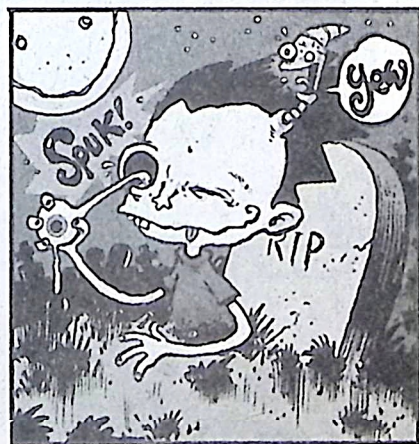
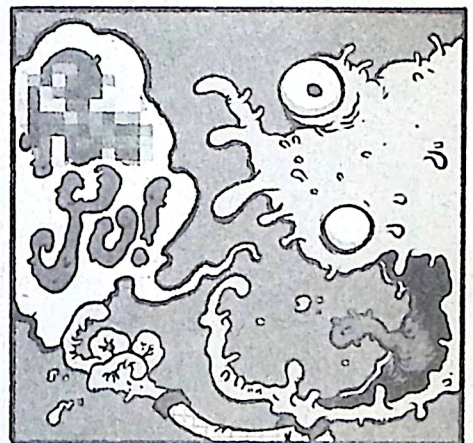
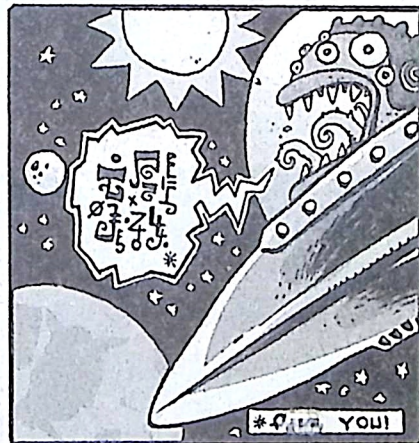
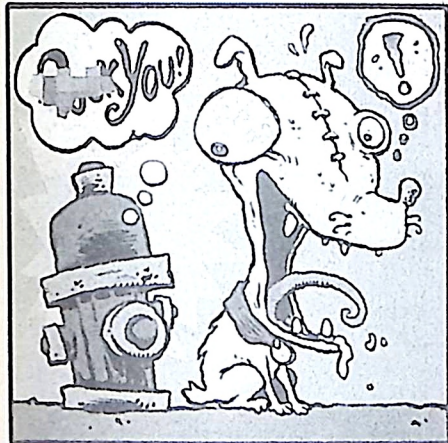
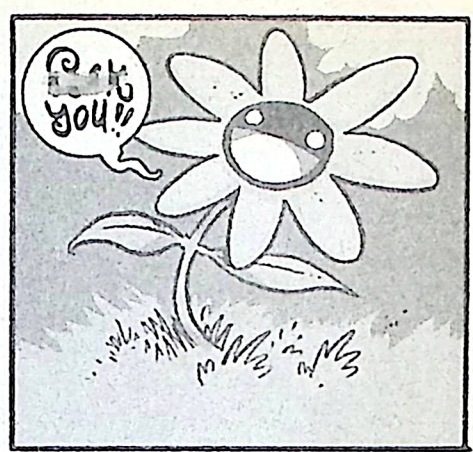
"Go tree someone else's coon," her diploma from Saint Genevieve's School For Pious Young Girls desired to plead.

But her body talked her out of it.

And her arm hung out the passenger's window and her fingertips lightly traced the stenciled letters ALL NITE TOWING as the cool August wind blew through the strands of her all-knowing hair.



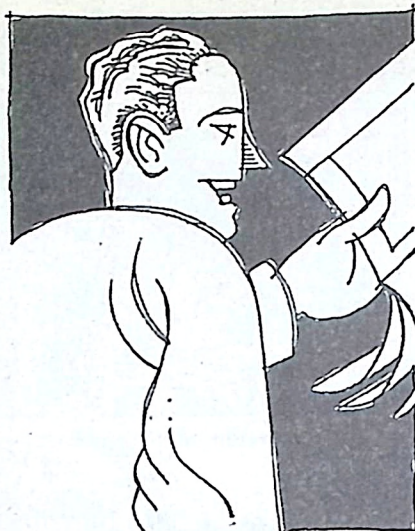




NUDE



... HMM



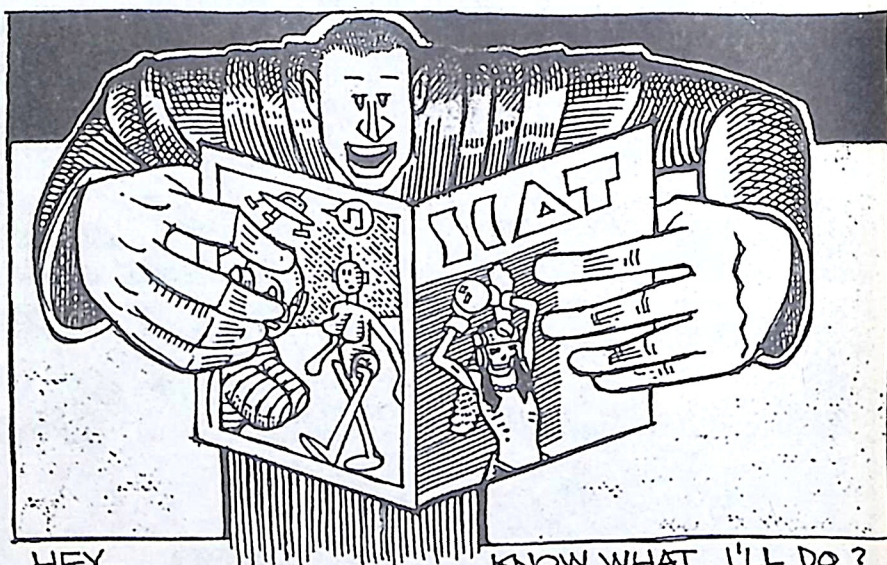
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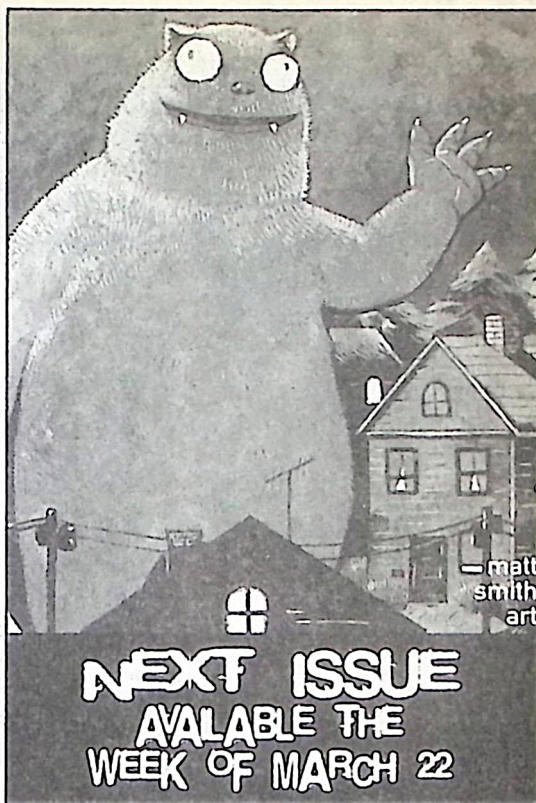
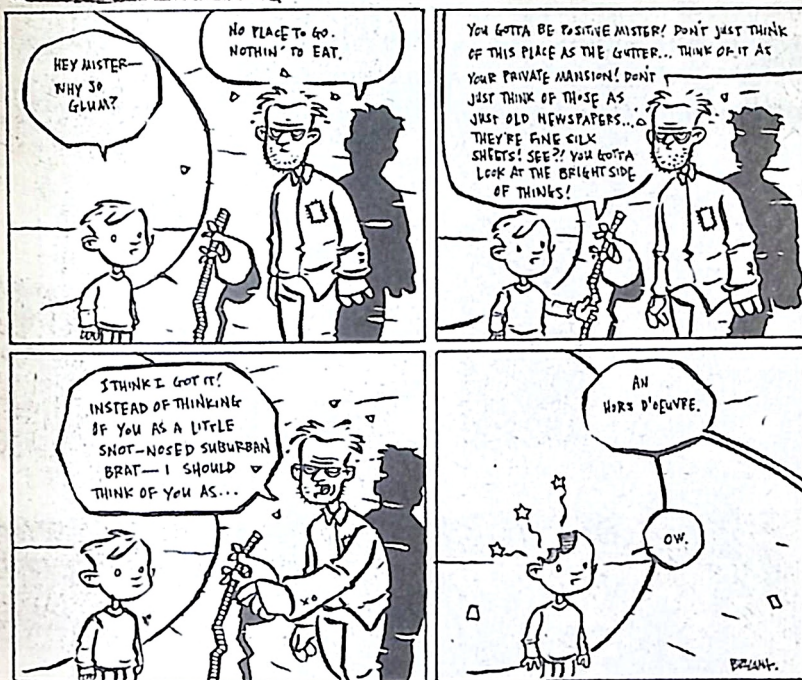


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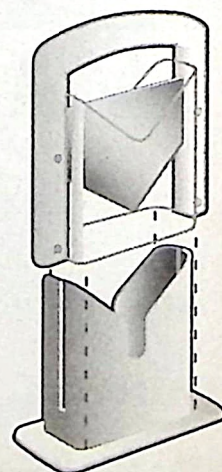
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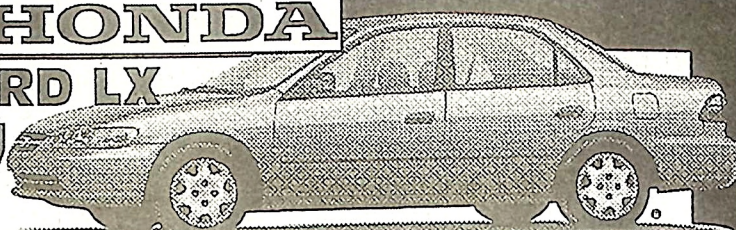
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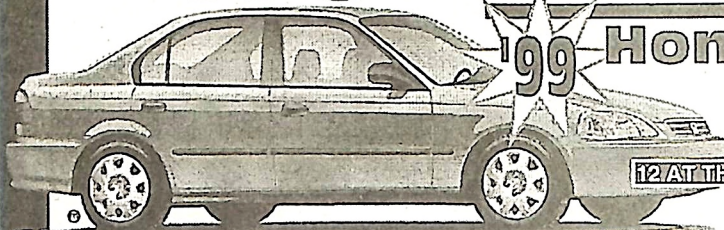
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